United Nations

S/PV.7691

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7691st meeting

Thursday, 12 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2016/353)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2016/353)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/435, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/353, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2287 (2016).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the vote.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation voted in favour of resolution 2287 (2016), given the importance of maintaining consensus in the Council on the issue of an Abyei settlement and of pursuing the activities of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei in upholding peace and stability in that region.

At the same time, we cannot support the impulse driving several delegations to raise ad infinitum the issue of appointing a civilian head of the peacekeeping mission, as reflected in the twenty-seventh preambular paragraph of the resolution. The Government of the Sudan does not agree to such an appointment and its views cannot be ignored. Even the very name of mission in Abyei speaks against appointing a civilian head. We recall that basic peacekeeping principles require United Nations peacekeeping operations be deployed with the consent of the parties to the conflict. That requires the assent of all interested parties, including the Sudan, to any change in the mission's leadership, especially as in this case it falls under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and the friendly country of Egypt on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We wish you every success.

I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his effective and wise leadership of the Council last month.

Today the Security Council adopted resolution 2287 (2016), extending the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for six months. We value the positive role played by UNISFA since its establishment. Its efforts have complemented those of the Government and the community, and we have begun to see the fruits of the establishment of security and stability in the peaceful coexistence and progress made between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya. The efforts of the Sudanese oversight committee have also borne fruit, as the Misseriya herding tribes have been able to gain access, without friction or conflict, to areas that had been inaccesible to them for five years. These movements of the Misseriya herding tribes follow their traditional routes through the Abyei Area, in accordance with the 1956 borders, in search of grass and water in the dry season. This access is provided for in the Abyei Protocol and the Agreement of 20 June 2011, in particular paragraph 39, as follows:

> "[P]astoral nomads shall enjoy rights of migration and access to pasture and water in accordance with traditional migration routes in the Abyei Area."

The Government of the Sudan seeks to establish civility in Abyei, and is therefore committed to all agreements signed with South Sudan, including the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that led to the foundation of the Republic of South Sudan, as well as the 2005 Abyei Protocol and, most recently, the Agreement of 20 June 2011, which established the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. The Committee has yet to be operationalized due to the fact that the institutions provided for in the Agreement — the legislative council, the executive council and the police — do not yet exist. Moreover, the Committee has not met on a regular basis because of the endless excuses and delays put forward by South Sudan and its failure to participate.

I commend the efforts of the African Union facilitator of the Committee in his recent communications calling for a meeting on 4 May. The meeting did not take place because the delegation of South Sudan demurred, although it did request a meeting for 10 May, which it also failed to attend. The most recent meeting of the Committee was held in March 2015. We therefore call on our brothers in the Government of South Sudan, following the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity there, to engage seriously with the Sudanese Government and the African Union in expeditiously establishing the institutions of Abyei provided for in the Agreement of 20 June 2011. That would help us to identify the final status of Abyei, which remains the sole prerogative of the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan, in accordance with the signed agreements.

Until that time, we reaffirm that Abyei is Sudanese territory and that the Republic of the Sudan enjoys full sovereignty over Abyei, in accordance with the provisions of international law and the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, and as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the 2005 Abyei Protocol. That status can be amended only by referendum mutually agreed with the Government of South Sudan. That is also true for any other measure to which both parties must consent.

As the UNISFA mandate has been extended for six months, I should like to reassure the Council that the Government of the Sudan will cooperate with the Interim Force in discharging its obligations. That has been the Government of the Sudan's consistent approach since the Force was established and will help to achieve peace, security and stability in Abyei. It is also important for UNISFA to adhere to its mandate under resolution 1990 (2011), whereby it was established. That will create an environment conducive to achieving the desired goals. I should therefore like to refer to certain paragraphs of resolution 2287 (2016) that contradict the mandate.

First, the twenty-seventh preambular paragraph refers to the appointment of a civilian head of mission. That runs counter to the nature of the Force and its mandate, as well as to the letter and spirit of the Agreement of 20 June 2011, which stipulates that any change in UNISFA must be approved by the three signatories: the Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of South Sudan and Ethiopia. We have forwarded the outcome of our communications with Ethiopia in that regard in a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan to the Secretary-General dated 25 October 2015. The letter communicates a crystal-clear message that no provision of the Agreement can be amended without the consent of the three parties, as clearly stated in the Agreement.

Secondly, I refer to those provisions of the resolution referring to the establishment of the Abyei Police Service. That would run counter to every agreement signed since 2005, most recently the Agreement of 20 June 2011, because such institutions can be created only by the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and by no other entity. Since such a police service does not exist, we find it necessary to protect our oil facilities, which, Council members will recall, were the target of an attack that destroyed all the oil-producing infrastructure in Heglig.

Fortunately, the two countries have undertaken no unilateral action, generally speaking, or measures on the final status of Abyei, with the exception of one unilateral referendum in 2013 that was rejected by the Security Council. The final settlement that we desire remains pending. Until then, Abyei will remain an integral part of the Sudan and all its citizens will remain Sudanese citizens, with all the rights enjoyed by Sudanese citizens, including the rights to vote and to stand for election. We therefore hope that the Secretariat and relevant departments will support the Security Council by adopting a positive stance in that regard.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations
S/PV.7692

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Provisional

7692nd meeting

Friday, 13 May 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Berthier
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mr. Abdul Razak
	New Zealand	Mr. Walbridge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Faye
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Mr. Gee
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

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16-13707 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2016/7.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7693

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7693rd meeting

Monday, 16 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2016/407)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-13791 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2016/407)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Vlora Çitaku to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/407, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tanin.

Mr. Tanin: Let me first congratulate Egypt on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month.

The Secretary-General's report before the Council (S/2016/407) details essential events in Kosovo and the region, and the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) from mid-January to mid-April. However, some developments since the Secretary-General's previous report (S/2016/99) are of more importance than the routine activities. Accordingly, today I wish to highlight those and some broader considerations. I have spent a good part of my professional life on members' side of this table, and I am therefore aware that routine reporting is not always the best use of time devoted to matters on which the Council remains actively seized.

First of all, Kosovo has been and continues to be at the centre of issues that are vital to overall security in Europe and to relations in a wider context. As I emphasized in my previous statement to the Council in February (see S/PV.7637), internal political dynamics in Pristina preoccupied our Mission — as well as the European Union (EU) missions and many other actors — for almost one year, culminating this April in the inauguration of a new President of Kosovo. Also during April, Serbian general elections were successfully held, with a new Parliament and Cabinet there currently in the process of formation.

The election of a new President of Kosovo, albeit under a divisive atmosphere, and the newly mandated Government of the Republic of Serbia provide together, I believe, an excellent opportunity to draw a line under a period that has often been marked by political infighting and other distractions. I have noted with appreciation the conciliatory messages and vision presented both by Prime Minister Vučić and by President Thaçi following their respective electoral successes. I join other engaged actors in the hope that these peaceful transitions of power will help the political scene to settle and offer more room for energy to be spent on other, more fundamental challenges facing the region.

Less than two weeks ago, the population of Kosovo received important and undoubtedly welcome news. The European Commission formally proposed to the EU Council and EU Parliament to transfer Kosovo to the visa-free short-stay list for travel in the Schengen area. The authorities of Kosovo deserve credit for the efforts made towards fulfilling the conditions of the visa liberalization road map. At the same time, they have acknowledged that a great deal of work remains to be done in order to translate this important step into the concrete economic and social progress expected by Kosovo's people.

I note that one month earlier, the EU Stabilization and Association Agreement for Kosovo was also announced. The Republic of Serbia's Stabilization and Association Agreement entered into force in September 2013. Again, placed side by side, these crucial achievements demonstrate the progress that the region is making towards the goal of greater integration, with all the benefits such integration brings. The links are not always clearly spelled out between the ongoing peace process, which is at the core of our UNMIK mandate, and these EU processes. In fact, the links are fundamental, stressed not simply in resolution 1244 (1999) , but also in the far-sighted European Council Summit held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 2003 and ever since. The standards and conditions set forth in EU stabilization and association agreements are not ends in themselves, but more importantly the means for generating peace, prosperity and well-being for people.

For Pristina and Belgrade, integration is closely interlinked with the EU-facilitated high-level dialogue process. The capacity to meet the standards of integration directly reinforces the capacity for productive political dialogue and other important channels of mutual cooperation. Kosovo's recent advancement in its European perspective should reinforce and enhance the dialogue process between Belgrade and Pristina, which is fundamental to Kosovo's future security and to peace in the region.

A salient feature of the consensus on which the EU-facilitated dialogue rests is the requirement for flexibility and innovation. All possibilities should be on the table and should be debated openly if this framework of discussion is to make swifter and meaningful progress. This moment, with electoral processes nearly concluded on both sides, appears to be a propitious time to re-energize the talks and build new momentum. I believe that this must remain a central objective on both the EU and United Nations agendas during the coming months.

The establishment of the Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo, ever since it was first agreed in April 2013, has been subject to much misunderstanding and controversy in public discourse among both communities. To borrow words spoken by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini 10 days ago in Pristina, the Community/Association represents "a step towards a stronger Kosovo, not a weaker one, and in a more stable region". It was agreed by both sides at the highest level in order to allow for the livable integration of the Serb community and other communities into public life in Kosovo. During his inaugural address, President Thaçi stressed themes of reconciliation and spoke of the difficulty but also the necessity of leaving the past behind. The dialogue and agreements between Pristina and Belgrade are essential to this process and are real steps on the path to lasting peace.

Kosovo still faces the hard-nosed realities caused by unemployment, inequality, the challenges of developing a productive economy to meet sustainable development goals and overcome legacies of impunity, and weaknesses in its rule of law institutions. All these factors are serious challenges to the mandate of promoting peace and stability. International involvement should be a central component of support that can help Kosovo's institutions, and indeed the wider region, to meet such difficult challenges. Resources that are applied through international channels, including through our Mission, should be mutually reinforcing and directed efficiently towards meeting these common goals.

I have spoken to leaders representing all parties, political stripes and communities during the past weeks and months. I will do much more of this in the coming days. The main concerns I hear are those that are familiar everywhere in post-conflict settings: the need for economic opportunity, positive future prospects for communities and families, better health care and a clean environment. While visiting municipalities in the north and other parts of Kosovo, I saw just how essential it is that the engagement of the international community — including the United Nations, the EU and Member States — be focused on the real living conditions of the people. Real Kosovo politics are local. What matters is how leaders, like those to whom I have spoken in various municipalities, address the everyday needs of the people in their communities; how they understand their grievances; how they find solutions. If identity politics primarily drove the wars during the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, what we are witnessing now is the unity or polarization of people around issues that are foremost social, economic, and environmental.

While visiting different parts of Kosovo, I observed how much of what we sometimes call the "old world" is dispensable. Militant nationalism has lost the mandate of the heavens. What is sorely awaited is a new alternative. When I speak with Kosovo's young people about their concerns, "jobs" and "justice" are the two words I hear the most often.

Within Kosovo's political sphere, continuing differences and intense debate remain essential. I hope those debates will move into acceptable channels where they belong and where leaders can best work towards meeting the real interests of people. That includes, obviously, a strong democratic opposition. The political profile of the Kosovo opposition has for the past year been involved in a tense effort to change the horizon of power in the Assembly by any means necessary, including violence. I believe that its reconsideration of that path, though wrongly portrayed by some as a descent into dissent, is rather an opportunity to revitalize the atmosphere, which still suffers from deep mistrust, and to return to healthy democratic norms without sacrificing the substance of political dissent and debate. Whatever political reconfiguration may or may not be in the cards, what is more important is that Kosovo's political actors behave responsibly by taking on the issues that matter most for the future.

Our Mission remains unique, not only for what it is, but also for what it is not. UNMIK no longer administers Kosovo. It is not a parallel structure. It is not an obstacle to any objective, any institution or any individual. UNMIK remains important for the support and legitimacy it can provide; for the focus it can help to encourage; for the experience and know-how it freely shares; and for its role as a bridge between the Council and the people and communities of Kosovo and the region. We have been assessing and recalibrating our own use of resources to assist areas where they most directly promote the fulfilment of our mandate, on human rights issues for example. Indeed, as the leading United Nations body on the ground we are working closely with Kosovo institutions as well as with international partners to promote the realization of high human rights standards. We are part of the broadest and most inclusive efforts to help discourage corruption and support the rule of law area, realize better opportunities for families and for the younger generation, and strengthen the protection of non-majority and vulnerable communities. We are also drawing on expertise and resources from across the United Nations system in areas where they may be of assistance, for example the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and many bodies that are specialized in pressing issues, including the just handling of migrant and refugee flows and discouraging young people from the paths that lead to violent extremism and terrorism.

To work at its best and in order to work together with the leadership in both Pristina and Belgrade — as well as with EU institutions — and to remain flexible and adapt our Mission, we depend upon the informed support of the Council. With the Council's support, that is where we intend to take the Mission in the days ahead.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Tanin for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*): I thank you, Sir, for the attention you have accorded to the question of Kosovo and Metohija through the regular exchange of views in Security Council meetings convened to discuss this topic pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999).

The status-neutral role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is paramount to the process of coordinating the international presence and the stabilization of the situation in the southern Serbian province. I would also like to point out that UNMIK's strengthened presence and role are of particular importance to the Republic of Serbia and, especially, to the Serbs and other non-Albanians living in Kosovo and Metohija, all the more so in view of their confidence and trust in the Mission. Serbia expects UNMIK to continue to fulfil its mandate under resolution 1244 (1999) in the coming period. In view of the overall political and security situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the continuation of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, we believe that UNMIK must continue to carry out its mandate in respect of all the issues relevant to the consistent implementation of the resolution.

Also of exceptional importance are the contributions made by other international organizations with mandates under resolution 1244 (1999), includubg the strengthening of security, the rule of law and respect for human rights in Kosovo and Metohija, especially those of the Serbs and other non-Albanians who, 17 years after the arrival of the international presence, continue to face numerous obstacles to the realization of their basic rights and fundamental freedoms.

The ongoing presence in Serbia of over 200,000 internally displaced persons forced to flee Kosovo and Metohija, along with many security and other challenges faced by its non-Albanian population, speak loudly and clearly. Only 1.9 per cent of those 200,000 internally displaced persons have been able to return in a sustainable manner. I therefore reiterate my call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as I did in my last statement to the Council (see S/PV.7637), to explain why this information is not presented in his reports, whether that 1.9 per cent should be considered acceptable, and who stands ready to remedy it. The Special Representative would be well advised to present that information repeatedly in his reports, as one of UNMIK's key goals and objectives under resolution 1244 (1999) is precisely to facilitate such returns.

Security incidents that negatively affect interethnic confidence and trust continue to present a serious challenge. Violence against non-Albanian communities — especially returnees — inevitably impacts their sense of security of and exacerbates anxieties among potential returnees. Sadly, those in charge of law and order have failed to act in almost all cases, while the number of the legally valid sentences passed against the perpetrators remains minimal. The Community Rights Assessment Report of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo of November 2015 reveals that intercommunity tensions surrounding the return of displaced persons remain a recurrent issue. It goes on to say that in most cases OSCE monitoring identifies only limited municipal efforts to address those tensions and build confidence and trust, and that during the reporting period the OSCE recorded a total of 479 incidents in Kosovo that had the potential to negatively affect the security perceptions of communities belonging to a numerical minority at the municipal level. More than half of these recorded incidents — 310 — affected the Kosovo Serb community, including returnees and the Serbian Orthodox church. They range from theft, verbal assault and severe damage to and illegal occupation of property, including cultural heritage sites and cemeteries, to incidents inciting hatred and aggressive nationalism and physical assaults or intimidation.

The assaults on the cultural and religious heritage of non-majority communities are particularly damaging for interethnic relations. The case in point is the break-in into the Orthodox church in the village of Pejcici, municipality of Prizren, and the demonstrators' desecration of the Church of Christ the Saviour in Pristina after the demonstrations of the opposition in downtown Pristina last January. This holy site, which was a frequent target of Albanians' attacks and which had served for years as a dump site, has been the subject of persistent attempts by the Pristina authorities to change the purpose of that location, even though it is registered in the cadastre as property of the Serbian Orthodox church.

The scribbling of graffiti on the walls of the Saint Nicholas Church in Pristina glorifying the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the terrorist organization around which the entire international community has united to fight against, is another case in point. The message of the desecrators of the religious site in the heart of Europe is "ISIL is coming". The assaults on the Serbian cultural and religious heritage and identity are painful evidence that the laws intended to protect and promote the community rights in Kosovo and Metohija are by and large dead letter. Only a serious effort on the part of all relevant actors to address all outstanding issues in a professional manner, in good faith and conscientiously, aimed at promoting normalization and creating conditions for genuine respect of human rights and freedoms for all may guarantee reconciliation, life together and respect for differences.

It is said in the current report (S/2016/407) that, compared to January and February 2015, the number of recorded incidents against minority communities was reduced in the same period this year. Nevertheless, the fact that inter-community incidents continue in Kosovo and Metohija on a daily basis sends a strong negative message to the members of the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities. In view of the report's almost complete failure to mention ethnically-based incidents, let me point out just some of the incidents that did occur in the reporting period: assaults on returning Serbs and their property in the villages of Berkovo and Pasjane, the stoning of returnees' houses at Klina and Prizren, and the burning of, and the planting of explosive devices in, Serbian houses at Orahovac and Gnjilane.

Let me point out that measures to achieve durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kosovo and Metohija, including the settlement and execution of their property and legal claims, need to continue to be taken. Let me also point out that, with regard to internally displaced persons, Serbia is strategically committed to fully supporting each and every person in his or her quest either for sustainable return or for local integration in the place of displacement as the case may be. Yet, my country's support to potential returnees will be insufficient short of proper engagement by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina and the acceptance or at least tolerance of the returnees by the receiving community and an active role of the international community. The drafters of all future reports should bear in mind that those goals have not been fulfilled yet.

I call again on the United Nations and other sectors of the international administration in Kosovo and Metohija to help overcome the problems that hinder the return of IDPs and jeopardize their position, including continued personal threats and the usurpation of their property. We all, the international community included, run the risk of becoming gradually inured to the culture of impunity for the criminal offences committed against the Serbs and other non-Albanians. In the report by Freedom House, entitled *Freedom in the World 2015*, it is stated that ethnic Albanian officials rarely prosecute cases involving attacks on non-Albanians and that returning refugees face hostility and bleak economic prospects, and property reclamation by displaced persons remains problematic. Similarly, in the *Kosovo 2015 Human Rights Report* issued by the Department of State of the United States, it is outlined that the return process remained chronically plagued by security incidents and by the reluctance of the receiving communities to accept minority returnees.

The lack of security and marginalization of returnees often discourage returns. In its *Kosovo 2015 Report*, the European Commission says that authorities at local and central levels did not do enough to facilitate return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, while the OSCE Mission in Kosovo concludes in its report that full and effective institutional action on returns-related programmes at local and central levels continues to be hindered by a lack of strategic support from the range of Kosovo institutions involved and that relatively little has been done by municipal and central institutions to discourage such incidents, which inevitably have an impact on the sustainability of return and future interest in return.

The non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija face serious and manifold institutional, legal, administrative and political obstacles regarding the protection of their property rights. The obstacles run counter to the provisions and standards of relevant Universal and European conventions, while the property rights of the Serbs are violated all over Kosovo and Metohija even today, in particular by the sale of companies in Serbian communities. By and large, the economic situation of the Serbs and the members of other minority communities in the province is characterized by legal and physical insecurity and by numerous cases of usurped property that cannot be restored. A substantial part of the property of displaced Serbs has been sold in transactions in which forged sales agreements or false personal identification documents of alleged owners have been used. The Serbian community and the displaced Serbs, in particular, have therefore been much more vulnerable to economic vagaries and poverty.

Inevitably, an effective resolution of the cases of illegal occupation of property is essential for security and the rule of law in Kosovo and Metohija; the serious shortcomings in addressing these cases threaten the unimpeded enjoyment of property rights. I cannot but observe that, apart from the thematic report of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo on fraudulent property transactions in the Peć region, no other mission, including the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), charged with monitoring the rule of law, addressed this problem. It is precisely this problem, it is said in a report of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, that the Kosovo authorities and the international community should seek to resolve without delay.

The results of the work of the Privatization Agency of Kosovo in Serbian communities are evidenced most patently in the municipality of Štrpce. Since the second half of 2014, the Agency usurped and liquidated the most important economic entities that accounted for most of the jobs and provided the livelihood to most of the people in the community. They include the Lola plant, Mladost department store, an agricultural combine, a veterinary clinic, Hotel Junior and the planning agency for a national park. These entities are now closed and their employees unemployed. The deterioration of the economic situation brought about by institutional violence may lead to the deterioration of the security situation and serious consequences for the local population wherefore greater attention and engagement by the international presence in the province, especially in northern Kosovo and Metohija, are called for.

Indeed, it is in the field of the rule of law that various international governmental and non-governmental organizations often report that the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law in Kosovo and Metohija continue to be the weakest links. According to the most recent Community Rights Assessment Report of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 67 per cent of non-Albanian respondents of a public survey stated that the lack of trust in Kosovo and Metohija judicial institutions was a serious obstacle in realizing their rights. As outlined in the World Report 2015 of Human Rights Watch, the justice system in Kosovo remains weak. This assessment is upheld also in USAID/Kosovo Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2014-2018. We are also concerned about media reports of the Pec Basic Court's indictment of 14 Kosovo and Metohija Serbs from Klina municipality for war crimes allegedly committed during 1999. According to our information, the indictees are members of families that have submitted official applications to return.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the Republic of Serbia is committed to conducting constructive dialogue with Pristina at all levels and to implementing the agreements arrived at to date, which reflects its firm resolve to continue to actively contribute to promoting stability in the Western Balkans and seeking exclusively political and diplomatic solutions to all the remaining issues. Unfortunately, Pristina has not yet taken the necessary steps to fully implement the agreements reached in the Brussels talks. I would also recall that in the absence of proper mechanisms for ensuring the systematic, institutional and effective protection of the interests of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija, the signing of the Brussels agreement was motivated by the need to find ways to achieve that protection, which, according to the agreement, would be done by the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities. Regrettably, owing to a lack of political will and the institutional crisis in Pristina, the key provisions of the Brussels agreement related to the establishment and functioning of the association/community have not yet been complied with.

Political radicalization and a deteriorating security situation resulting from political ferment and the rise of extremism are a threat to every resident of Kosovo and Metohija, and as a rule to the returnees to ethnically mixed communities most of all. The political crisis in Pristina carries the serious risk that the dissatisfaction of voters in majority communities will spill over and be aimed at minority communities, and the Serbian community in particular. It hardly seems likely that the incendiary nationalistic rhetoric of the politicians in Pristina will help to allay the tensions and bring reconciliation.

The fragile security situation in Kosovo and Metohija is also being exacerbated by rising extremism and radicalism. According to data for January, about 300 Kosovan Albanian men and 36 Albanian women joined the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria, a presence that, compared to the population of the territory of origin, represented the world's largest percentage of foreign terrorist fighters in ISIL. However, we have been informed more than once by the security services of some of our foreign partners that the unofficial number of the extremists from Kosovo and Metohija fighting on foreign battlefields differs wildly from the official data and that the actual number is close to 900.

The political, social and economic conditions of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija remain very complex. Serbia therefore hopes that the international community, and the United Nations in particular, will continue to provide assistance aimed at building the confidence and trust that we believe are essential to a firm foundation for a normal life for all in Kosovo and Metohija. In our view, a commitment to European integration is the driving force for normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina, and we hope that the European Union will continue to facilitate the dialogue. UNMIK's continued engagement is especially important, along with an undiminished international presence in Kosovo and Metohija as a whole, because, as the Secretary-General rightly concludes in his report, much work remains to be done in Kosovo and Metohija to promote greater tolerance and reconciliation among its communities, ensure the protection of minority communities, facilitate displaced people's return, uphold their property rights and safeguard religious traditions without impediment or stigma.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Ms. Çitaku.

Ms. Çitaku: I am very proud and honoured to address the Security Council today. I am honoured because this Chamber has been the scene of many important discussions leading to my country's freedom, and I am proud because the past few weeks have shown that Kosovo is on an irreversible path towards being embraced as an equal member of the world's great family of free nations.

I belong to a generation that has endured the worst. We have witnessed genocide, massacres, rape, exclusion and discrimination. We still have very fresh memories of a time when we were denied education and our schools were closed, when walls were built to separate the privileged minority from the majority and discriminate against them. We were denied access to public space; we were denied the right to play. The memory is still fresh of Serbian police beating and arresting our youngsters just because they were playing football.

But I am also fortunate enough to belong to a generation that has witnessed the birth of our State. We are a generation that has defied all odds, and while we once struggled to exist, we have now seen what was once considered impossible become possible. Our resilience was tested, fought and defied, but we succeeded — not because we had the power, but because we were right and because we dared to dream and hope. We hoped to be equal, to be free and to play. I am pleased to be able to say that those are no longer just hopes. We are equal. We are free. And we will play.

Last week Kosovo was accepted to the Fédération Internationale de Football Associations (FIFA) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). That is a great victory for equality and for sport. It once again testifies to the fact that sport and talent have no boundaries. We are proud that our young talents will no longer feel isolated and excluded. We are proud that an overwhelming majority of FIFA and UEFA members supported our cause. It is nevertheless disturbing to see our northern neighbour Serbia outraged at that wonderful news. While it was the dream of Mr. Fadil Vokrri, President of our football federation, to bring people together through football, his counterpart from Serbia delivered a politically loaded statement saying that our belief that our fight was over and our UEFA membership definite was just a dream. Furthermore, the Serbian Prime Minister stated that Serbia would fight fiercely to reverse the UEFA decision.

Serbia still wants to deny our children the right to play and our young people the right to feel equal and to compete and excel. I have one message for them — live and let live. Kosovars deserve a chance. And when they are given that chance, they shine. They come home and make us all proud, just as Majlinda Kelmendi did last month when she regained the gold medal for judo in the European Championships. We are appalled by the statements made by Serbian officials last week. Instead of remorse and apologies for denying generations of Kosovars their right to play and compete, we hear rhetoric that belongs to the previous century. While young Serbian sportsmen and women are excelling in various sports, the Serbian Government wants to deny the same right and privilege to Kosovo's young people. Kosovo's acceptance into UEFA and FIFA takes nothing away from anyone. It simply makes it possible for Kosovo's citizens to display their amazing talents to the world on an equal footing with everyone else.

Another important achievement for Kosovars was the recommendation of the European Commission to grant us visa-free travel to the European Union (EU), allowing for the strengthening of business, social and cultural ties between the EU and Kosovo. Kosovo institutions had to work hard to reach this goal. We were given 101 criteria — twice as many as the rest of the Western Balkan countries — but hard work did pay off in the end, which is yet another reason for us to feel equal. We grew up in the former Yugoslavia as a generation treated like second-class citizens. We are now equal citizens of the European continent, sharing the same space and the same opportunities to travel. For us, this has added value, as one third of our population already lives in EU countries.

While we are aware that visa liberalization is not the solution to the many challenges we face in creating a better environment and better living conditions for our citizens, we are also absolutely sure that visa liberalization will help our people move and travel freely, experience their continent and feel equal. Kosovar institutions and all political parties in the Government and the opposition worked hard to achieve this objective. While there are obvious disagreements among members of our political class, there is no division on our fundamental strategic orientation and aspiration for Euro-Atlantic integration.

Our path towards European integration was sealed on 1 April when the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the EU entered into force. As High Representative Mogherini said,

> "this Agreement opens a new phase in the Kosovo-EU relationship and represents an important contribution to peace, stability and prosperity in Kosovo and the region at large".

While we celebrate these great achievements — and Kosovars have many reasons to feel proud — there are families in Kosovo who are still mourning and for whom the war never ended. These are the families of the missing. For example, Mrs. Cerkezi, 17 years after the war, continues to serve the table for herself and the members of her family who are still missing: her husband and her four sons. They were taken away by the Serbian military and paramilitary forces in the spring of 1999. She still waits for them and she needs them back. She, along with thousands of mothers from Kosovo, still wait for the whole truth or at least a proper burial for their loved ones. They want a place where they can mourn their lost family members. They demand answers. It is imperative that Serbia open its files and archives to help close this painful chapter in our recent history.

The Serbian State, as has been documented, undertook unprecedented measures to hide the traces. They went as far as moving corpses from one mass grave to another and erected huge constructions on sites where the remains of human beings were buried. That is the case of Rudnice, in the region of Raška, where, despite the expectations raised by statements made by the Serbian authorities that 250 corpses — the remains of the victims — would be identified, only 54 Albanians have been found and reburied. They were innocent people executed in the massacres of Rezala and Cikatova.

We cannot build peace and reconciliation by burying the truth. The truth must be told. And the truth must be accepted, no matter how painful or shameful it is. Denial is not the answer. Kosovo wants good-neighbourly relations. Kosovo wants a new chapter in the region, but that requires the same level of commitment from all sides. The inter-State dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, facilitated by the European Union, is not an objective on its own; nor would it be a success, if it fails to normalize the relation between people.

On behalf of the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, I would like to reiterate that in line with our Constitution we will implement every single agreement we have reached with Serbia in Brussels. But then, how can we say we are working towards normalizing relations, if the Serbian President compares Kosovo to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)? Just last month, the Serbian President made that claim in Indonesia, and it was not the first time such a comparison was made.

I would like to state loud and clear that Kosovo is a European country that aspires to become an EU member. We share the same values, and more importantly, we share the same aspirations as the rest of Europe. Trying to label us as something we are not, trying to portray us as a nation that has no European cultural identity, is not only inaccurate; it is also unworthy of a country that is an EU candidate.

In fact, the contrary is true. Kosovo is an active partner of the global coalition of nations set up to counter ISIL. Since the beginning, we have complied with the provisions of the Security Council resolutions urging countries to adopt legislation prohibiting the joining of armed conflicts by their citizens in countries outside their State territory. We have put in place the right mechanisms, legal acts and strategies to counter violent extremism. We have gone way beyond words. Dozens of non-governmental organizations that fed radicalization have been shut down. After a large number of arrests, including of imams, people are in trials for sowing intolerant attitudes and influencing vulnerable persons. And this year, no single Kosovar has joined ISIL.

Kosovo sees ISIL as a common regional threat — a threat to Kosovo, to Serbia and to the rest of the Balkans. But, unfortunately, terrorism is not the only threat we face; equally dangerous are the keeping alive of the Milošević dream and hate speech and rhetoric. Kosovo has never been and will never be a source of hatred towards others or a source of destabilization. We are Europeans, not only by the mere fact that we live on the European continent, but because we are Europeans in terms of ideals and aspirations. All levels of our institutions, parties and civil society are strongly committed to combating this global threat.

Members of the Security Council should visit Kosovo and witness first-hand how proud we are of our multicultural and multireligious society. We are a secular Republic that has become a champion in the region for interfaith dialogue. They will find in Kosovo many cities where mosques, Catholic and Orthodox churches share the same yard. But unlike our northern neighbour, we will never use or allow religion to divide and incite hatred.

One need only visit Pristina to see the biggest asset we have: our young people. They represent a generation that, unlike mine, which dreamed only of survival, feels free and equal. They want to excel, innovate, compete and contribute. One need only visit the Innovation Centre of Kosovo in Pristina to find young women and men who, through science and research, are developing start-ups and much more, aiming to solve global problems. This is the strong Kosovo innovation community, oriented towards the future and based on knowledge and new technology, that has started to be widely recognized by the international community and to be awarded for its excellence. One need only visit Kosovo to see hope, but a different and better kind from that of my generation. It is an enthusiastic generation of hope and desire to excel and contribute to the community and to the world.

Of course, we have problems, just like any newborn. We still need to work hard to strengthen the rule of law and to fight corruption and organized crime. Some very important steps were taken recently in terms of legislation with a law on electronic procurement and, concretely, with the arrest of more than 50 people, including high-level officials, involved in organized crime. We are fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead of us, and we are committed to addressing all of them. It is our duty as a generation to leave behind not only a free and independent Kosovo, as we are aware that independence and freedom are not self-sufficient, but are just the preconditions for the creation of other values. Our duty is to leave behind a Kosovo that is more prosperous, in peace with all its neighbours and an active member of the global family. That is a goal worth fighting for.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tanin, for his very comprehensive briefing on the situation, and assure him yet again of our full support in the exercise of his mandate. I also thank the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and the Ambassador of Kosovo for their statements.

France actively supports the pursuit of political dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo under European Union auspices. The recent convening of a meeting between the Serb and Kosovo Prime Ministers, with the participation of the High-Representative of the European Union, was a further demonstration of the commitment of Belgrade and Pristina to the process of bilateral rapprochement. Fresh headway has been seen this area in recent months, in particular the integration of former officials of the Serb Interior Ministry into Kosovar institutions, as well as the entry into force in March of the agreement on the mutual recognition of diplomas. We welcome those steps.

We are eager to see all commitments signed within the framework of the agreements concluded under the auspices of the European Union implemented as soon as possible, including the creation of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities, which is a cornerstone of the dialogue. The normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina remains in general terms a sine qua non for their respective progress along the path of European integration. We therefore urge the Kosovo and Serb authorities to intensify their efforts to pursue dialogue in order to produce further concrete results in the coming months.

France remains concerned by the behaviour of a minority of the Kosovo opposition. Further disruptions of the work of the Assembly and violence and other acts of intimidation of elected officials are completely unacceptable. France calls on those responsible for such unacceptable actions to adhere to the standards of democracy and to express their concerns in the framework of existing institutions and with respect for the provisions of the Constitution. Violence and hate speech have no place in a society to which the overwhelming majority of Kosovo citizens aspire. Such actions imperil the progress patiently achieved by Kosovo for more than 10 years in the process of forging an independent, modern and democratic State. Despite these tensions, the Kosovo authorities must seek to keep the channels of dialogue open and continue to pay heed to the population. Domestic reforms are crucial to giving citizens new hope. The implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement must work to that end by fostering conditions conducive to the required change. The Kosovo authorities can count on our full support in that area.

Pursuing the efforts undertaken to entrench the rule of law in Kosovo must remain a greater priority than ever. That will entail first and foremost addressing impunity. The speedy ratification by the Kosovo President of the host agreement signed with the Government of the Netherlands as a precursor to the establishment of specialist chambers in The Hague is a decisive step forward, which we welcome. It is a clear demonstration of Kosovo's willingness to honour its commitments in the area of the rule of law. It is important going forward that all components of the specialist court take up their work according to the established timeline and that the Kosovo authorities cooperate fully to ensure that the prosecutions of those responsible for the crimes contained in the Marty report can commence.

The ongoing work on the issue of disappeared persons is also essential. In that regard, we welcome the recent appointment by Pristina of a Chair of delegation to the Joint Working Group on Missing Persons. We hope that it will provide an opportunity to give fresh impetus to the work of that body.

The consolidation of the rule of law will involve the fight against radicalization in all its forms. France welcomes the unconditional engagement of Kosovo in that area, both at the local level as well as through the membership of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. I take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which works daily to uphold the rule of law and security in Kosovo.

France will continue to support the efforts of the Kosovo authorities to achieve international recognition for their State. We welcome the recent admission of Kosovo as the fifty-fifth member of the Union of European Football Associations, coming as its does just days before the kickoff of 2016 European Championships in France. We also actively support Kosovo's candidacy to INTERPOL and the Council of Europe, and the strengthening of Kosovo's status within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I conclude by again recalling our hope for the continuation of the progressive transfer of the competencies of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to the Kosovo authorities, and for a review of the reporting cycle in the Council of the situation in Kosovo, given the ongoing progress seen on the ground, particularly as concerns the consolidation of Kosovo institutions and the bilateral dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his informative briefing. I also thank the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their statements.

Resolution 1244 (1999) remains the internationally accepted legal basis for resolving the situation in Kosovo, including strict respect for the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia. As Council members are aware, Uruguay has maintained its position of not recognizing Kosovo, underscoring the principle of the territorial integrity of States as a paramount standard of international law. That principle constitutes a central element for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation among the members of the international community.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/407) describes the political situation as being marked by tension and discord against the backdrop of the election by the Assembly of Kosovo of Mr. Hashim Thaçi as the new President of the province of Kosovo. Uruguay is concerned about the impact of political tensions on the security situation in Kosovo, as there have been a significant number of incidents, including violent protests, attacks and threats against civil servants and damage to State and private property, that are detailed in the report and that have spread throughout Kosovo. Uruguay regrets the occurrence of such incidents and encourages all efforts to find inclusive and peaceful forms of dialogue that will facilitate a solution to the problems facing Kosovo.

Uruguay also notes with concern outstanding issues in Kosovo in the area of the rule of law, such as accountability, impartiality, the effectiveness and independence of judges and prosecutors; the mistreatment of detainees, poor physical conditions, drug abuse, corruption and favouritism that prevail in prisons; prolonged pre-trial detention; and demands for compensation that are still pending. In that regard, Uruguay recognizes the important work of UNMIK in overcoming some challenges in the area of oversight and roll-out of certain rule of law functions, as well as its technical cooperation with the institutions of Belgrade and Pristina and its facilitation of requests for reciprocal legal assistance from States that do not recognize Kosovo.

Uruguay attaches great importance to combating sexual violence in conflict. In that regard, we welcome the regulation signed on 2 February by the Prime Minister of the province of Kosovo, establishing a Government commission and procedures for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence as civilian victims. In particular, we welcome the fact that the reparations outlined in the law include access to pensions, free medical treatment, employment, income-generating activities and education.

Uruguay notes with satisfaction the promotion by UNMIK of activities with a youth and gender perspective, such as the organization of a round table on the role of young women in reconciliation. We also welcome the progress achieved by UNMIK on behalf of the International Human Rights Working Group with the Office of the Prime Minister in order to consider its recommendations on the draft Kosovo human rights strategy (2016-2020).

In conclusion, I reiterate that Uruguay values the role played by UNMIK in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, and acknowledges the important role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations agencies present on the ground. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the important work of the women and men of UNMIK, whose efforts and dedication contribute to furthering the principles for which the Mission was created.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): We welcome and thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the report (S/2016/407) of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome the participation of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. We also welcome the participation of Ambassador Vlora Çitaku.

Based on our principled position that unilateral options are the wrong approach to resolving international controversies and until a settlement is reached by the contending parties, we reaffirm the validity of resolution 1244 (1999) as the applicable legal framework for reaching a comprehensive and peaceful solution of the Kosovo issue through dialogue and negotiations, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions. We therefore support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and understand the country's legitimate concerns on that issue.

We underline the fundamental role that the United Nations has been playing in Kosovo through UNMIK in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, its cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union (EU) Rule of Law Mission, and its continuous and constructive engagements with Pristina and Belgrade and all communities in Kosovo.

We continue to closely follow the situation in Kosovo. Taking note that the overall security situation remains stable.as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, we are particularly concerned with the tense and divisive political climate that has prevailed over the past six months. We consider absolutely unacceptable and condemnable the opposition party's continued disruptive and violent tactics against the Assembly of Kosovo, which are deliberately aimed at obstructing the normal performance of its duties.

The implementation of agreements between Belgrade and Pristina and the high-level European Union-facilitated dialogue has been facing consistent obstructions that have created a contentious political climate between the Government and the opposition and impeded meaningful progress in the implementation of major agreements, in particular regarding the establishment of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities.

We regret the prevailing climate of distrust and mutual accusations of delays in the implementation of agreements that have been reached, aggravated by tensions and fictions related to trade and development. That is even more regrettable considering that a positive note in the previous reporting period was struck by the initiatives of business leaders within the Chambers of Commerce in Belgrade and Pristina aimed at strengthening cooperation among the business communities. We expect that the political leaders of Belgrade and Pristina will be able to fulfil their commitments to implementing the concluded agreements, and that the high-level European Union-facilitated dialogue process will proceed in good faith and yield results.

On a positive note, we welcome the entry into force on 1 April of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo concluded in October 2015 and ratified by the European Parliament. Following the conclusion of an identical agreement with Serbia in 2013, we fully concur with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that:

> "For Pristina and for Belgrade, integration is closely interlinked with the high-level Europe Union-facilitated dialogue process. The capacity to meet the standard of integration directly reinforces the capacity for productive political dialogue and for other important channels of mutual cooperation".

We greatly value the EU-facilitated dialogue regarding, concerning which, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted,

> "All possibilities should be on the table and should be debated openly if this framework of discussion

> is to make swifter and meaningful progress. This moment, with electoral processes nearly concluded on both sides, appears to be a propitious time to re-energize the talks and build new momentum."

The rule of law still faces outstanding challenges. The Secretary-General's report identifies a number of prominent issues related to the judicial and law enforcement systems and the little progress made in the integration of judges and prosecutors from the Serbian judiciary into the Kosovo system, pursuant to the agreements reached through the European Union-facilitated dialogue.

Regarding cultural and religious heritage, despite the difficult relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Kosovo authorities, some concrete instances of dialogue have been reported, such as the conference organized by Kosovo authorities on interfaith dialogue and heritage protection, with the participation of the main religious creeds in Kosovo. It is our hope that such initiatives will take hold in Kosovo society, thereby contributing to fostering reconciliation and mutual understanding.

On human rights, it is key that the Kosovo human rights strategy be swiftly adopted and that the Joint Working Group on Missing Persons step up its efforts in resolving that painful issue for Kosovo society. Still, on human rights issues, young people are showing the way ahead. A good example was the signature on 14 February by 32 non-governmental youth organizations from the western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova of a "Balkan club" cooperation agreement establishing an information network to coordinate youth-related civil society engagement in the region.

The issues of youth radicalization, violent extremism and the presence of extremist organizations are ever-present challenges and matters of utmost concern. The adoption of a strategy by the Kosovo authorities on violent extremism and radicalization underpins the resolve of the authorities to pursue policies and implement energetic measures to counter such negative and dangerous trends.

We take note of the Secretary-General's observation that much work remains to be done to promote greater tolerance and reconciliation among the Kosovo communities and to ensure the protection of minority rights, facilitate the return of displaced persons, uphold their property rights and safeguard religious traditions without impediment or stigma. It is our hope that the wounds of the past will be overcome as soon as possible and that peace, tolerance and mutual understanding will prevail, permitting the building of a better future of economic and social progress for all of the people of the Balkans.

Finally, we commend UNMIK for its role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and for its constructive engagement with Belgrade and Pristina, and the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in stabilizing and normalizing the situation in Kosovo.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin for his briefing. I also thank Foreign Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku for their statements.

Since 1999, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has made critical contributions to assisting the people of Kosovo in developing multiethnic democratic institutions to uphold the nation's rule of law, while respecting the rights of all of its citizens. We thank Special Representative Tanin and his long line of predecessors for their dedication and service to that effort. But as we hear today, and as we too often convene in this Chamber on this topic, we must acknowledge what we acknowledge every three months. UNMIK's mandate has largely been accomplished. The only reason we continue to meet with such regularity has nothing to do with the security situation in Kosovo. It has to do with politics.

Let us be clear. Now is the time to seriously reduce the footprint of the United Nations Mission. We have some very talented staff in UNMIK whose skills are desperately needed in other missions. There is no need for all of them to remain in Kosovo. In that regard, it is appropriate to reduce UNMIK's budget, and we welcome the reduction in UNMIK's budget request. The Council seems stuck in the past, needlessly convening here every three months, and we repeat our call to extend the Secretary-General's reporting period on UNMIK from every three months to every six months.

Pristina and Belgrade are rightly focused on the dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU). They now need to redouble their efforts to normalize relations through those discussions. European Union High Representative Mogherini's continued leadership is critical to advancing that important effort. Discussions without implementation, however, will lead nowhere.

For the sake of regional stability and Kosovo and Serbia's EU aspirations, we call upon Pristina and Belgrade to fully implement the commitments they have made throughout the dialogue talks, including those made in August 2015 regarding telecommunications, energy, freedom of movement and the establishment of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities without any more delay.

We were pleased to witness the peaceful democratic transition of power from former Kosovo President Jahjaga to President Thaçi, underscoring Kosovo's democratic maturation. We also applaud the well-managed collection of ballots in Kosovo for Serbian elections, supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. That is exactly the kind of cooperation needed between the two countries to improve the lives and protect the rights of their people.

Kosovo has made some strides. The signing between Kosovo and the European Union of the Stabilization and Association Agreement and the decision of the European Commission to support visa liberalization are enormous milestones signaling confidence in Kosovo's path towards European integration. Those are significant developments that have the potential to meaningfully impact the economy and the lives of the people of Kosovo.

We also witnessed an extraordinary moment in April. The participation of Kosovo athletes in the European Judo Championships, a competition hosted in Kazan, Russia, was appropriately a source of great pride, and all the more so when Kosovo judo competitor Majlinda Kelmendi took the gold medal home to Kosovo. It was a powerful and inspiring moment of victory for a country that deserves it. Her victory, as well as the decision of the Union of European Football Associations and, just last Friday, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association to accept Kosovo's participation will inspire Kosovo's young people and are wonderful examples of the change that has taken place. After years of isolation, Kosovo's athletes can indeed pursue their dreams and do so as proud representatives of their country.

On the economy, more must be done. While Kosovo's Government has adopted some pro-growth economic policies, there is still serious work to be done on the economic issues that continue to hold Kosovo back, including corruption and unemployment. Specifically, Kosovo should implement e-procurement; it should be more transparent about ongoing corruption cases in the civil service, and it should pass legislative amendments to ensure that political appointees who are convicted of corruption do not get to retain positions of power. Stronger policies and actions will result in less corruption, and less corruption in Kosovo, as in any country, will lead to more opportunities for all.

As we have discussed here in so many different contexts, law enforcement cooperation across borders is an essential component of any viable strategy to combat terrorism and counter organized crime. That is especially true in the Balkans. Kosovo's police continue to demonstrate their professionalism and capabilities, in cooperation with their neighbours and the international law enforcement community, but for too long, Kosovo's police have been excluded from the international community of police. It is critical that Kosovo fully integrate into that community, including the International Criminal Police Organization. Including Kosovo in our collective effort to counter common threats does more than benefit Kosovo. It serves the entire Balkans region and all of us worldwide.

Once again, the United States would like to thank Kosovo for its contributions to the global fight against terrorism and efforts to counter the scourge of foreign terrorist fighters. Kosovo's work through its national strategy to counter violent extremism and its law criminalizing foreign terrorist fighters are important contributions to that effort, rendering all the more offensive and counter-productive — I would say — the recent rhetoric of some officials in the region suggesting that recognizing Kosovo is akin to recognizing the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

In closing, let me direct some words to my colleagues, representatives of States Members of the United Nations. A minority of them have not yet recognized Kosovo. The United States urges them to consider taking steps to better integrate the citizens of that young country into the international community. It is the right thing to do, it is in line with Charter of the United Nations, and it will serve us all. Small steps, such as partnering with Kosovo through INTERPOL and other organizations, is in all of our interests and will serve well our collective efforts to advance peace and security.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Ambassador Tanin, for his briefing, and welcome the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku back to the Council.

My delegation has taken careful note of the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/407) and in the Special Representative's briefing about developments in the political and security situation in the territory of Kosovo. We welcome the reported improvements — which, unlike the two previous reports, offer glimmers of hope —but we regret the continued acts of violence and obstruction of the smooth course of political life in Pristina. In that regard, Spain supports and endorses the Secretary-General's renewed call on all political leaders, including those in opposition, to act in a responsible manner and in line with the law, the good practices of democracy and the rule of law when voicing their political positions and opinions.

We also listened carefully to the analysis provided today by the Special Representative on the role played by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Spain strongly supports the important work carried out by the Mission and other international missions operating in Kosovo. We commend the particular attention accorded by the Special Representative, in the context of his mandate, to the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and enhancing coexistence among the various communities of Kosovo. Spain believes that these three aspects are critical and indispensable if we are to make headway towards genuine reconciliation in accordance with democratic and European values. Against that backdrop, we call on all parties to maintain a constructive spirit and adequate cooperation with UNMIK and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as they carry out their work.

It is also essential that progress be made in the high-level dialogue facilitated by the European Union. I reiterate Spain's support for the dialogue, which is consistent with the constructive spirit in which my country has consistently followed, without prejudice to our position of principle. We regret the lack of progress made in recent months at the political and technical levels. Trust must be fostered between the parties and constructive and committed dialogue on specific issues must resume. We cannot lose sight of the fact that this process was designed to find appropriate and effective responses that, independent of other considerations, would promote and fulfil the expectations, desires and needs of the entire population of Kosovo.

I therefore conclude by calling on the parties to resume without further delay — in their behaviour and practice and not just in words — their collaboration and cooperation with the Brussels process, to which there is no alternative. The first step to that end must be the implementation in its entirety and without prior conditions of the agreements concluded to date, with particular attention to the effective establishment of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): It is my pleasure to welcome Special the Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, back to the Council. I thank him for his briefing.

I also thank First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their important statements.

The Special Representative has provided us with the latest analysis of the current situation in Kosovo, which, in our opinion, still lacks improvement. Despite some positive developments, the region continues to face the same problems and challenges the Council discussed back in February. The internal political landscape in Kosovo is marred by violence. It is very disappointing that the work of the Kosovo Assembly is regularly disrupted, including by the release of tear gas canisters by some representatives. We are also worried about the street violence, with the Kosovo institutions' property being targeted by threats and vandalism. I underscore that acts of violence in any form remain an unacceptable means to express political views.

Ukraine is concerned that the political tensions may negatively impact the progress of the implementation of the major agreements between Belgrade and Pristina. Among the issues that demand urgent attention, we would underline the lack of needed actions on the part of the Kosovo institutions in establishing the association/community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo; problems incurred at the crossing points by cars registered by the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs; the implementation of the agreement on car insurance, and so on.

We urge Belgrade and Pristina to redouble their efforts to fulfil the provisions of the agreements of

19 April 2013 and 25 August 2015. We hope that, in the next reporting period, the Council will hear more positive news on their implementation, such as, for example, the progress recently made by Belgrade and Pristina in the area of the mutual recognition of diplomas.

Ukraine fully supports the high- and technical-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the European Union. In this regard, we hail the commitment of both sides expressed in January 2016 to continuing the normalization of their relations and to focus on the implementation of agreements reached. In our view, the Brussels dialogue should continue to play a central role. We also hope that the entry into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo on 1 April will become another factor in the further stabilization of the situation and will promote a better atmosphere in the talks between Belgrade and Pristina.

Another important area in which success is much needed is the promotion of greater tolerance and reconciliation among communities in Kosovo, as well as the protection of minority rights and the facilitation of the return of displaced persons. Special attention should be paid to the continuous assaults on the cultural and religious heritage of non-majority communities, which could further poison interethnic relations. Ukraine is convinced that the solution of these problems will promote further political stability in Kosovo.

Finally, I would like to make some comments on the work of UNMIK. The Council's support for UNMIK, as well as the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union presences in Kosovo is particularly important at this stage. Their work and assistance to Kosovo institutions and communities continue to be essential to political stabilization and intercommunity reconciliation. The priorities of the Mission for the coming period should be focused on the promotion of peace, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. Another task is monitoring the process of the implementation of the agreements between Belgrade and Pristina, especially in the context of creation of association/community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): I would like to begin by welcoming Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, to the Security Council and thanking him for his insightful briefing. I also welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku.

I warmly congratulate Mr. Hashim Thaçi on his election and inauguration as President of the Republic of Kosovo. The election was conducted in accordance with democratic procedures and was a significant step towards full-fledged democracy in Kosovo.

Seventeen years have passed since the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established. I remember that in 1999 UNMIK was the only governing body in Kosovo, really an interim administration in the proper sense. Kosovo was just a devastated land and people with no governing structure. Now that Kosovo has its own Constitution, Government and Assembly, the responsibility of the Mission might have changed accordingly, and its role should be reconsidered. The work and setup of and resource allocation for UNMIK must accordingly be different. What then should be the Mission's current focus?

First, it should be to promote reconciliation among different ethnic groups in order to prevent unwanted instability in the Balkans region. In this regard, the Kosovar and Serbian authorities must continue to engage in dialogue and to normalize their relations, in a spirit of tolerance and common interest.

Secondly, there are other risks, including the infiltration of violent extremism and the continued flow of small arms. These elements galvanize or aggravate whatever antagonisms exist into violence, which could spill over into the region. So these are the problems that UNMIK must tackle as a matter of priority.

UNMIK has been playing an important role in addressing these priorities. But at the same time, if the international community coddles Kosovo too much, it might hinder Kosovo's ability to stand on its own feet. It is true that democracy has not yet fully taken root in Kosovo and that the Kosovar economy is still weak. However, in order to achieve sustainable stability and prosperity in Kosovo, Kosovo's ownership is of vital importance. Let us therefore trust in the Kosovar people, who are well qualified and well equipped to shape their own future.

In closing, I wish Ambassador Tanin every success in his important work and assure him of Japan's strong support for him and his Mission.

Mr. Barro (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal wishes to congratulate Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for the high quality of the report that has just been presented to us (S/2016/407). We also welcome the presence among us of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and that of Ms. Vlora Çitaku of Kosovo.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the situation in Kosovo has remained stable overall despite the tense atmosphere, as described by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his report, that surrounded the appointment of the new President, Mr. Hashim Thaçi. We would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr. Thaçi every success in his new office and to pay tribute to his predecessor, Ms. Atifete Jahjaga, for her leadership and her efforts to promote peace and development.

Senegal welcomes the ongoing dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, as demonstrated by the meeting that has just taken place in Brussels between the two countries. More specifically, my country would like to welcome the restated commitment of the new President and Prime Minister to the process of the normalization of the relationship between Belgrade and Pristina that has been undertaken under the auspices of the European Union, and to the comprehensive implementation of previously reached agreements, particularly concerning the creation of the Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo. In that respect, my delegation calls on both parties to pursue dialogue at the highest level under the auspices of the European Union and to encourage the relevant partners and countries and partners to continue to use their influence to support the negotiations.

We believe that now that the electoral process has come to a conclusion, the time is ripe to breathe new life into the discussions between Belgrade and Pristina in order to definitively turn a page in the history of both countries. That said, I am pleased to be able to welcome the two agreements signed by the Government of Kosovo in August 2015, one with Serbia, on the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo, and a second agreement, with Montenegro, on the demarcation of the border between the two countries.

The conclusion of a three-phase plan between the chambers of commerce of Belgrade and Pristina aimed at harmonizing veterinary certificates and resolving the technical issues hampering cross-border commerce also deserve our commendation, as does the signing by representatives of the Serbian armed forces and the Kosovo Force of an agreement on the complete lifting of the air security zone.

We strongly encourage both parties to continue along this path and to step up dialogue on the joint management of crossing points, and we urge stakeholders to make further advances towards peace and development, including by promoting the implementation of the agreements reached on 25 August 2015 in Northern Kosovo.

In terms of promoting the rule of law, my delegation welcomes the announcement of the imminent rollout of the work of the Specialist Chambers, a Kosovar institution that will be headquartered in the Netherlands and comprise international judges with the principal mandate of trying those responsible for serious crimes committed either during or immediately following the conflict in Kosovo.

By the same token, we deem vital that efforts continue in terms of cooperation and coordination between the parties in order to facilitate, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the return of displaced persons or, failing that, to work to find lasting solutions in that respect.

Senegal supports unreservedly the joint European Union-United Nations programme aimed at enhancing trust at the community level through the protection of cultural heritage, and we would recommend the ramping up of synergies, particularly in terms of cooperation in the field of information exchange so as to help resolve issues related to missing persons.

To conclude, my delegation would like once again to pay tribute to Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his wise leadership of UNMIK, and to welcome the achievements of the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and, of course, the European

Union, all of which are key stakeholders involved in the process of promoting peace and progress in Kosovo.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Mr. Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing. China welcomes to today's meeting His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and thanks him for his statement. I have also listened attentively to the remarks of Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia, and we understand Serbia's legitimate concerns with regard to the question of Kosovo. In our view, resolution 1244 (1999) is the principal legal basis for resolving that question. It is vital that in doing so we adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and engage in dialogue and negotiations within the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in order to reach a compromise settlement that is acceptable to all the parties.

The recent security situation has remained generally stable, but Kosovo is still dealing with complexities and uncertainties. China commends the efforts by the Government of Serbia to find a political solution to this issue, and welcomes the fact that the high-level political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina has achieved progress and that existing agreements are being implemented. We support the ongoing efforts by both parties to maintain a pragmatic and constructive dialogue, effectively protect the legitimate rights of all of Kosovo's ethnic groups and promote national reconciliation. We hope that the parties will refrain from any actions that might escalate or complicate the situation and that they continue to search for a lasting solution to the question of Kosovo in order to maintain security and stability in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole.

China commends the work being done by UNMIK under the leadership of Special Representative Tanin. We support its continued efforts to carry out the Security Council's mandate, and we hope that the international presence in Kosovo, including UNMIK, the European Rule of Law Mission and the Kosovo Force, will improve their coordination with a view to playing a positive and constructive role in achieving an appropriate settlement of the Kosovo issue.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the briefing by Mr. Zahir Tanin and the statement by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić. We also welcome the presence of Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

Venezuela once again emphasizes that resolution 1244 (1999) remains the applicable international legal basis for achieving a comprehensive settlement within the framework of political negotiations on the issue of Kosovo. We have reiterated on numerous occasions the need for strict adherence to international law with regard to finding peaceful settlements to disputes, non-intervention and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Serbia.

The support of the United Nations continues to be fundamental in Kosovo, in particularly through the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in order to promote security, stability and respect for human rights — efforts that have been complemented by the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). UNMIK, KFOR and EULEX, based on their respective mandates, should continue to play a proactive, balanced, neutral and complementary role in the direct dialogue, with a view to promoting a lasting, sustainable, fair and mutually acceptable solution to the question of Kosovo.

While the report (S/2016/407) of the Secretary-General indicates that the security situation remained stable in recent months, we are concerned about the violent actions carried out by the opposition in the Kosovo Assembly, which impeded the effective implementation of the First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013. We are also concerned about the difficulties faced by Serbs when it comes to the right of return. Given that situation, the association/community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo is yet to be established in northern Kosovo. Among other things, therefore, we urge the authorities of that province to work decisively to achieve that goal as agreed in Brussels at the highest level. In that context, we reiterate that violence is not the way to achieve peace and stability. We hope that the newly elected authority in the province of Kosovo will support the normalization process that was agreed in 2013, in an atmosphere of dialogue and mutual understanding. Now more than ever, it is necessary that meetings at the highest level take place between Pristina and Belgrade.

With regard to regular discussions facilitated by the European Union on the technical aspects, we welcome the fact that modalities have been agreed for the implementation of the 2011 agreement on mutual recognition of teaching diplomas, whereby the European University Association will handle the certification of diplomas. Education is a fundamental tool towards creating the values and principles of the culture of peace.

Furthermore, we regret the lack of progress in the integration of Serbian judges and prosecutors into Kosovo's judicial system in accordance with the agreements reached through the dialogue facilitated by the European Union. We urge that additional efforts be carried out to facilitate further agreements in different areas that can be supported at the highest political level, with a view to fully implement the agreements of 2013.

The issue of shedding light on the situation of persons who went missing during the war remains a priority. In that regard, we encourage interested parties to intensify joint work on the matter, and we welcome the public holding of the forty-second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Missing Persons, with the participation of Pristina and Belgrade. We also note the establishment of the commission for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence as civilian victims, with the support of UN-Women.

In terms of cultural and religious heritage, we stress the need for the parties to work together to provide effective protection for important cultural heritage of the various Kosovar communities. In that regard, we see as a positive sign that efforts are under way by the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Kosovo authorities to resume meetings of the Implementation and Monitoring Council, which have been suspended since 2015.

In the context of the fight against impunity, progress includes the ratification of the agreement with the Government of the Netherlands to host the specialist chambers to investigate allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the armed conflict in Kosovo. We call on all stakeholders to continue working so that the chambers can begin their work as soon as possible. The application of justice in such cases under the due process will contribute to reconciliation and peace among all parties.

In the context of the fight against terrorism, we highlight the efforts of the authorities of the province of Kosovo to continue implementing measures to combat the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters in order to prevent the recruitment of citizens of the province by terrorists within the framework of the five-year strategy adopted on this issue. However, we are concerned about information about the high number of citizens who have joined the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

We remain convinced that the fight against terrorism must be accompanied, among other things, by effective strategies against social exclusion, poverty, violence and intolerant ideologies in order to prevent radicalization, especially of youth. In addition, we work must be carried out to effectively implement the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly prohibiting the financing, training and arms transfers to such groups.

In conclusion, we once again encourage the parties to redouble their efforts in pursuit of a peaceful, just and lasting political solution within the framework of international law, including full compliance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the 2013 Brussels agreements.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): My delegation welcomes the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku of Kosovo, back to New York, and thanks them both for their statements. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his insightful briefing.

My delegation welcomes the election of Mr. Hashim Thaçi as the new President of Kosovo. We commend his message on the normalization of relations with Serbia, as well as his priorities, which include the promotion of human rights and the countering of radicalization and violent extremism in Kosovo. We hope to see under his leaderhip sustained focus by Kosovo on reconciliation, unity, sociopolitical reforms and economic development. We would also like to pay tribute to former President Atifete Jahjaga for her leadership and significant contribution towards Kosovo's nation-building over the past five years.

Malaysia is concerned about the violent protests — mentioned by Mr. Tanin — by the opposition parties and their supporters in relation to the presidential elections, and the implementation of agreements signed between Pristina and Belgrade through dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU). We reiterate our calls on the relevant parties in Kosovo to cease violence, intimidation and inflammatory rhetoric, and to resolve their grievances through democratic channels, dialogue and engagement. We hope that, under the new leadership, Kosovo leaders will continue to engage in an inclusive dialogue to address the people's concerns.

We recognize Kosovo's aspiration for European integration and welcome the latest development to that end, including the transfer of Kosovo to the visa-free list in the Schengen area and the entry into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the EU. We call on the leaders of Kosovo to remain steadfast in implementing the Agreement and the necessary socioeconomic reforms towards peace, stability and prosperity for Kosovo and the region.

Malaysia also takes note of the progress made during the reporting period to implement Kosovo's five-year strategy to counter violent extremism and radicalization.

With regard to ensuring justice and accountability, we commend the ratification of the host agreement between Kosovo and the Netherlands on the Kosovo specialist chambers to try alleged crimes committed during the Kosovo conflict between 1998 and 2000.

Malaysia also welcomes the establishment of a Government commission and procedures for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence as civilian victims, in collaboration with the UN-Women. Such developments are long overdue to ensure justice for the victims of sexual violence during the Kosovo conflict.

With regard to the historic 2013 Brussels Agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, we wish to see more movement towards its implementation, including the integration of the judiciary and the creation of an association of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo.

We reiterate the need to implement outstanding commitments in the spirit of dialogue, cooperation and constructive engagement, to build confidence and trust between Pristina and Belgrade. We therefore appreciate the positive signals and commitment by both sides at the highest level in that regard.

Lastly, I join my other colleagues in reaffirming support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which continues to play a key role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. We also commend the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, and the important role of the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Kosovo Force in ensuring peace, security, and the rule of law in Kosovo.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): I welcome the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku back to the Security Council today, and I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing.

The political leadership in both Serbia and Kosovo has reiterated a commitment to continue normalizing relations. We encourage their ongoing determination to ensure that this important agenda continues to move forward. To do so, it will be necessary for both sides to implement agreements that have been reached so far, including in relation to Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo. We hope that the EU-facilitated dialogue can continue to advance the process of normalizing relations, and that both sides can bring to the table the necessary political will and requisite flexibility to make progress possible. Ongoing technical discussions in Brussels can support the process by building shared understandings and common interests.

With respect to the political situation in Kosovo, we are disturbed by recent violent and disruptive episodes in the Assembly of Kosovo. As noted in the report (S/2016/407) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), acts of violence, in any form, remain an unacceptable means to express political views. When elected representatives engage in such acts it sets a poor example for others to emulate, and risks seriously undermining democratic institutions. Such incidents also undermine reconciliation efforts. We welcome efforts under way to promote a more peaceful and tolerant society in Kosovo, such as the Kosovo Government's recent conference on interfaith dialogue and heritage protection as tools of reconciliation and combating religious extremism. It is important that further progress towards reconciliation not be deterred or undermined by the efforts of a disruptive minority.

Another important aspect of reconciliation is confronting the past in order to allow a society to move forward together. We welcome further progress in the establishment of the specialist court to try allegations arising from the European Union Special Investigative Task Force, including Kosovo's ratification of a host agreement with the Netherlands. We hope that the remaining preparatory work can be concluded expeditiously so that the court can begin its work as soon as possible.

As others have mentioned, we also urge further progress on rule-of-law issues, including ensuring respect for an independent and accountable judiciary and the appointment of judges and prosecutors from the Serbian judiciary into the Kosovo legal system.

Before I conclude, allow me to welcome the positive role UNMIK has played. We reiterate our view that the Council should adopt a more flexible approach to how it considers this agenda item, bearing in mind the number of other pressing issues with which the Council grapples.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the presence here of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić. We share his comments. We would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing on the work of the United Nations mission in Kosovo. We also listened very carefully to statement made by Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

Given the trajectory of the discussion, I would like to make a number of comments. First of all, resolution 1244 (1999) was and remains the only platform for resolving the situation in Kosovo. No one has the right unilaterally to revise the resolution. Security Council resolutions may be altered only by the Council itself. Secondly, a lot has been said about the need for recognition and the need for truth. I agree with that. It is true that, to resolve the very complex issues of Kosovo, they need to be acknowledged and we need to speak of them truthfully.

We should not remain silent about the real challenges in the province. Unfortunately, the main part of today's discussion has been devoted not to these problems and the issue of stability in the Balkans, but rather to technical and organizational matters. Nevertheless, the situation in the province is one of constant crisis and legal scepticism. The political situation remains unstable. Conflict with the Kosovo opposition, which demands a rejection of the agreement on the association/community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo and a revision of the border with Montenegro, is becoming increasingly brutal. Instead of defending its position through dialogue, the opposition has decided to use violence.

The European Union-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is a mechanism for normalizing the situation in the province and yet, since August 2015, there has not been any progress. They key pending issue is the establishment of an association/community of Serb majority municipalities. The reason for this is neglect by the Kosovar Albanian side of their obligations and their attempts to revise them unilaterally and, unfortunately, with the silent consent of the European Union mediators. We hope that the specialist court established to investigate the crimes committed by the fighters of the Kosovo Liberation Army will begin its work as soon as possible and will not resume the unsuccessful methods of the work of the former International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

We are convinced that criminals, no matter what positions they currently occupy, must be punished. Time is passing. It seems that there are already problems with potential witnesses. In April, for example, a former fighter of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Bedri Curri, was killed. The only plausible reason for this crime is that apparently he might have been able to testify for the prosecution. We note the continuing gaps and problems with regard to the rule of law in the province. We have very serious doubts about the impartiality of justice, the effectiveness of the work of judges and prosecutors and are concerned about the high level of corruption, the violations of the freedom of the press and organized crime, including human trafficking and drug trafficking. These problems need to be addressed.

The situation of the Kosovar Serbs remains very difficult. There are still cases of physical violence against them. In January, the participants of an anti-governmental demonstration in Pristina desecrated the unfinished Church of Christ the Saviour in that city. The Kosovar police did nothing to intervene. I also point to the graffiti on the cathedral in Pristina praising the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). What is the meaning of that? There are other problems as well. Serbian monasteries, churches and cemeteries have once again become targets of violations and desecration. The international presence must step up it efforts to protect Serbian cultural and religious heritage. A great deal has been said about international requirements and the international presence. They are exactly the international requirements we need to fulfil, not just abstract slogans.

There are other problems as well. There have been clear attempts by the Kosovar authorities to acquire the Trepča mining complex, the main interest owner of which is the Foundation for Serbia's Development, a major employer of Kosovar Serbs in the north. They are also major problems with Serb properties in Kosovo. Some 30,000 units of Serb real estate have been encroached upon. This is an old problem that has not been resolved. A good example of this is the Visoki Dečani monastery, whose ownership is being contested. We have demanded that these problems be resolved for a long time in this Chamber. Those are international demands and requirements.

The rate of return of refugees and internally displaced persons is very slow. Furthermore, as we see it, Kosovar Albanians are very interested in going to Western Europe due to the extremely difficult socioeconomic situation in the province. We would like to point out that, owing to the weakness of law enforcement and the security situation in general, the province as a whole risks becoming a grey area in the middle of Europe, used as a refuge and a transit hub, not only by representatives of organized crime, but also by radical Islamists. All of this obviously is conducive to the use of the territory of the province by extremists for recruitment and training purposes.

As far as the graffiti about ISIL on the churches that I mentioned, it is a clear sign very dangerous attitudes among the locals. Kosovo is a leader in Europe in terms of the number of combatants fighting for ISIL per capita, while the population of the province is less than 2 million. This is a problem that affects not only the security of the Balkans, but Europe as a whole. It requires far more attention. We will see how the expected visa-free travel to Europe will impact migration flows into Europe. We believe that the solution to the situation is not to try to sweep the problems under the carpet, but rather to urge Pristina to immediately implement its obligations, including first and foremost the establishment of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities. That will be a real litmus test for their readiness to respect the independence of minorities and ensure their security.

It is not simply about shouting slogans, but about undertaking concrete steps and ensuring security and living up to the commitments undertaken in the framework of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Further delays will lead to a continued deterioration of the situation in and around Kosovo. We think that it is also counterproductive to try to promote Kosovo's membership in international organizations, which we have been seeing more and more recently. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains valid. Given the current unstable conditions, it is obviously very important to maintain the United Nations presence in Kosovo, through the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, and the Mission must have all the necessary financial and human resources to carry out its mandate.

Today's discussion has demonstrated the timeliness of this issue. It is also very important to continue to follow the situation closely. Statements that run counter to this need also run counter to reality. In that connection, we say that the appeals that have been made today to radically reduce and drawdown the Mission or even to reformat its mandate have no grounds. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/407) clearly states that a huge amount of work remains to be done to build a democratic, multiethnic society in Kosovo.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I join others in welcoming Special Representative Tanin back to New York. I thank him for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/407) and for his briefing today. I also welcome First Deputy Prime Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku to the Council and I thank them for their statements.

It has been less than three months since we last discussed Kosovo in this Chamber (see S/PV.7637), but in that short space of time we have continued to see welcome progress in Kosovo. Yes, clear challenges remain, but the decision to welcome Kosovo into the Union of European Football Associations and the Fédération internationale de Football Association last week both show that there is growing confidence in Kosovo among the international community.

The onus now is on the Kosovo authorities to seize this momentum to address the challenges ahead. To do so they will have to escape the fractious and divided politics that have characterized part of this reporting period. Violent protests and violent disruptions of parliamentary business have no place in any democracy in any part of the world. We therefore welcome the public commitment of the new President, Hashim Thaçi, to dialogue and to reaching out to minorities and bringing communities together. We hope that commitment will deliver real progress in those areas. The United

Kingdom looks forward to seeing all political leaders in Kosovo making that pledge.

This is precisely the moment for Kosovo to unite to tackle the big issues of the day, such as organized crime, corruption and issues concerning the rule of law. The swift ratification of the host State agreement on the specialist chambers shows that it can be done. It sent a powerful message about tackling impunity and addressing the past. We also fully support Kosovo's bid to join Interpol, not just for the sake of further integration into the international system but for the practical benefits that membership would bring.

Despite the protests, the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/407) makes it clear that the overall security situation, including in non-majority communities, remained stable throughout the reporting period. That is positive. Worrying incidents have continued, such as the recent regrettable attack on a Serbian television crew in Pristina, and they are a further demonstration of the need for increased outreach and the importance of building a more inclusive society. But we should not confuse acts of criminality with a more systemic problem. We should all rather look to the future, for Kosovo and the region.

Prospective membership in the European Union (EU) offers the greatest opportunity for stability and prosperity for the region. Rather than seizing on isolated incidents of ethnic tension, the Security Council would serve the people of the region much better by discussing the support we can offer them to help them realize their EU ambitions. Sadly, it is clear that more progress must be made on the EU-facilitated dialogue if normalized relations are to become a reality. Leaders in both Serbia and Kosovo must recognize that it is not enough just to commit to implementing agreements reached in the dialogue; they must deliver them, too, and stop putting further barriers in the way of their implementation.

Let us therefore call on both sides to step up their engagement in the dialogue and start delivering for the people in both their countries. For it is Brussels, not New York, that will shape the future of Kosovo. As such, we welcome the proposed reductions in the budget and personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. It is clear that the Mission should be doing less, not more. In keeping with that approach, we reiterate our view that it is long past time to reduce the frequency of these meetings. We also support a reduction in the frequency of the Secretary-General's reports. They are useful tools, but the latest one, received just over two months after the previous Council meeting, repeats a great deal of information from the previous reporting period relating to the Stabilization and Association Agreement and the protests in Parliament, to name only two issues. Reports every six months would end that repetition and give the Special Representative and his team more time for in-depth analysis.

Ultimately, however, it is the actions outside this Chamber that will speak louder than the words uttered within it — actions such as the European Commission's recent recommendation to grant Kosovo visa liberalization; UEFA and FIFA's acceptance of Kosovo into their fold; the participation of Kosovo's athletes in the Olympic Games later this year; and the entry into force last month of Kosovo's Stabilization and Association Agreement. Such actions demonstrate that the discussions in this Chamber exist in a vacuum, a bygone era in which Kosovo's independence, sovereignty and very existence are still questioned. We need only look at the news from last week to see that that era is long over. The world and Kosovo are moving on without us.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Egypt.

At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his thorough briefing to the Council. We fully support his efforts. I would also like to welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku, and to thank them for their statements.

Egypt has been following the recent political developments in Kosovo and hopes that its recent presidential election augurs a new beginning and an opportunity to engage in transparent and constructive internal dialogue aimed at reducing recent tensions. We would also like to warn against the escalation of those tensions by opposition forces in Kosovo and to reject any resort to violence as a means for expressing political opposition. It will be important to build on the recent statements by Kosovo officials regarding their full commitment to carrying out the agreements signed with Serbia. We would like to emphasize the importance of making every effort to arrive at a comprehensive settlement of all the issues outstanding between Belgrade and Pristina through sincere negotiations and dialogue based on good intentions and mutual respect between the two sides, and within the framework of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1244 (1999).

That can be achieved only by creating a constructive regional climate conducive to a resumption of the political dialogue held under the European Union's auspices. In that regard, we should emphasize the importance of implementing every provision of all four pillars of the agreement of August 2015, without exceptions. We should avoid turning the agreement into a point of contention and seize the opportunity it presents to reach final settlements aimed at paving the way for economic development and achieving prosperity for all the peoples of the region.

We should also build on some of the positive developments mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/4007) on the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina regarding certification of academic documents and other steps. We believe in the importance of continuing dialogue at the technical level as a step towards normalizing relations between the two sides. We commend the ratification of the international agreement concerning the hosting by the Netherlands of the specialist chambers for trying war crimes perpetrated during the conflict. We hope it will help to buttress the principles of the rule of law, accountability and justice with a view to achieving comprehensive reconciliation. We call for the provision of the support needed to ensure the specialist court's work and to its establishment as soon as possible.

At the same time, we look forward to seeing enhanced efforts by the Kosovo authorities with regard to the voluntary return of internationally displaced persons, protecting artefacts of cultural and religious heritage, speeding up settlements and comprehensive reconciliation, ending discrimination among all communities, protecting minority rights and consolidating the rule of law, in addition to the need for support to the authorities in confronting the challenges presented by refugees and the threat of terrorism. In that connection, we support the five-year strategy that Kosovo has outlined for fighting terrorism with a view to tackling that serious challenge.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We emphasize the need to foster coordination among the efforts of the Mission, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with a view to carrying out all the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Serbia has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian, English interpretation provided by the delegation*): As the representative of the Republic of Serbia, I am persistently trying not to bring up this subject — and only discuss the reporting period covered in the report (S/2016/407) — but, sadly, Ms. Çitaku consistently held forth and delivered a political speech that had nothing to do with the report on the last three-month period. I am therefore forced to react.

Ms. Çitaku's speech, which was distributed to Council members, uses the words "the Republic of Kosovo" in its heading, when in fact no such name is used in the official communications at the United Nations. I therefore truly hope that you, Mr. President, are going to modify this item in your agenda because Ms. Çitaku has been invited to the Council under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, and not as the representative of the so-called Republic of Kosovo, which does not exist here at the United Nations. If that were the case, if the Republic of Kosovo existed, why have I been invited here? What does the Republic of Kosovo have to do with the Republic of Serbia? I would ask that you pay due attention to this breach of the rules of procedure, Mr. President, as it has been a constant irritant, about which we have shown great restraint until now.

Ms. Çitaku made a reference to genocide. Where is the verdict where the events that occurred were defined as genocide? I would again ask the President to pay due attention when certain words are used. I would also like to appeal to certain members of the Security Council to take into consideration, when they are speaking of genocide and other terms and phrases, that it does not matter what our positions are; rather, what matters is what the judicial rulings have to say and whether something was determined on a legal basis. We are not the ones who can make a judgment as to whether a genocide had been committed or not. What is important is whether a court issued a ruling on this.

Five or six years after the Second World War, France and Germany created the European Coal and Steel Community. Since 199, a very long period of time has passed, yet Ms. Çitaku spoke of fresh memories. Should I remind you, Mr. President, of the Battle of Kosovo in the fourteenth century? Should I remind you of the fact that in the fourteenth century the Serbian population was the majority? How can she speak of genocide when it is her majority that has committed a genocide? Some 200,000 Serbs were expelled from Kosovo since 1999.

The Special Representative, Mr. Tanin, is present here. I wish that he would dare say that 200,000 people were expelled from Kosovo, and up until now only 1.9 per cent of them have permanently returned. Should we overlook this fact?

Ms. Çitaku mentioned massacres, genocides and so forth. I would remind Ms. Çitaku that there are courts to decide such matters — The Hague Tribunal, and because of the crimes committed by Kosovo, there is a going to be a specialist court with its headquarters in the Netherlands. I would ask her to stop hearking back to the 1990s.

As has been mentioned here, we should not turn the Security Council into a forum where we compete for the award for best imaginative work. Ms. Çitaku spoke of everything but the topic at hand. Why did we meet today? We were convened to discuss the real problems. Yet Ms. Çitaku has spoken of sports achievements, when she should speak of the day-to-day problems such as the fact that tear gas is being used in the Kosovo Parliament, or the fact that Kosovo has turned the Church of Christ the Saviour into a public toilet. During their demonstrations, the Kosovars have been abusing cultural landmarks such as the Visoki Dečani Monastery, whose walls were covered with graffiti saying “ISIL and the caliphate are coming”.

We have nothing against Kosovo. Its people should live their lives, but Kosovo’s representatives should not be allowed to constantly speak of the Kosovo people’s freedom and the fact that they are now allowed to play football. Now that they are “free”, should they alone be entitled to win on the soccer pitch? Throughout history, the Serbs were the majority demographic in Kosovo. But due to a Turkish invasion, followed by a five-centuries-long occupation, the Serbian majority was turned into a minority. Those who have committed crimes should be brought to trial. Today the Pristina appeals court upheld the acquittal of Fatmir Limaj, who had been accused of crimes committed against Serbs.

With regard to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), I would say that it breached its statute when it admitted Kosovo as a member even though Kosovo is not a full-fledged Member of the United Nations. Such admission is in direct breach of the UEFA rules.

Members of the Security Council should consider what is going to happen in future when some of their countries find themselves in the same situation. I ask the representatives of these large countries to treat us with respect. I duly respect the United States and other countries. But what has been said here does not demonstrate that they respect us.

In the Security Council, in the presence of Serbia, Member States were called upon to recognize the independence of Kosovo, and the Council is saying that only a minority of countries have not recognized Kosovo’s independence. But I would like to remind the United States and the United Kingdom that neither Angola, China, Spain, the Russian Federation Ukraine, Uruguay nor Venezuela has recognized Kosovo. The recognition of Kosovo by Egypt was the final act of its former President, Mr. Morsi, but Egypt has not gone any further in the operationalization of that recognition. If seven member States have not recognized Kosovo’s independence, how can it be said that only a minority of States have not recognized Kosovo? Should we add up the population of all those seven countries? I think the Council is not being fair and balanced in its treatment of Serbia, which has been a very constructive partner in the dialogue with Pristina.

I call upon all countries that recognize Kosovo to reverse their decision, because this situation could arise in future in any part of the world. And when they speak of recognition, there is no mention of the Islamic factor or European values. This is simply a case of upholding international law and whether one country can, without any consultation with the country of which it is an integral part, secede and separate from it. If the Council believes that should be the case, it should codify it and include it in its resolutions and decisions.

As we are observing resolution 1244 (1999), we intend to come here and be constructive.

Ms. Çitaku is of Albanian descent. I am a Serb. Kosovo is hers as much as it is mine. It belongs to all of us who live there, or used to live there. I was born in Kosovo, but no longer live there. But there are hundreds of thousands of Serbs. What are we going to do with the 200,000 Serbs who were expelled from Kosovo? Do the great Powers think it nice to say that 200,000 people were expelled and only 2 per cent have realized sustainable return? Kosovo is a free and democratic State, but what are we going to do with those 200,000 people? When will they be able to return?

We cannot agree with the fact that, when it comes to Serbia, certain international agreements are made, sometimes unilateral steps are taken. We are not in favour of unilateral moves, for when you do that sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, as in the case of UNESCO. I think we are all fed up with the fact that we are constantly speaking and elaborating the same topic. Let us resolve this issue. But no, Kosovo thinks this topic has been resolved. If Ms. Çitaku thinks this issue has been resolved, then please first consult Spain whether or not her Stabilization and Association Agreement is the same. Well, it is not. Spain and other countries asked that Kosovo not sign with the European Commission under State status, but as a territory. That is why I think this is still a pending issue.

Ms. Çitaku spoke about everything, but failed to mention security issues and everything else that was to be the subject of this debate. For the next time, therefore, we will have to prepare diligently for the meeting — who did more to whom throughout history — if she thinks this is the way to conduct these meetings.

Ms. Çitaku is not Kosovar, she is Albanian. Serbs and other minorities — all of us — have our sore spots in history. But we should not constantly return to history, but instead look to the future.

I was not the only one to sign the Brussels Agreement; Mr. Thaçi signed it with me. Is Ms. Çitaku going to sabotage the Agreement and constantly try to talk about genocide, or is she willing to talk and work towards establishing good relations? The fact that Serbia is being constructive should not be viewed as our weakness, but as us being open to discussion and flexibility. They should not use this meeting to hearken to the past. If they think someone committed genocide, rape and other crimes, then please take them to court. But do not abuse this venue to promote their country's independence. Resolution 1244 (1999) is status-neutral. I call upon all countries to uphold the legitimate interests of Serbia, as we are upholding other countries' legitimate interests.

I thank the Council once again. I asked to speak here today because, every time we speak with representatives of Western countries — the United States, the United Kingdom, France and so on — we always talk about de-escalating and reducing harsh rhetoric. We always ultimately agree to do so, but then we come here and are forced to listen to long speeches that have nothing to do with the state of play on the ground. If the Council wants us to fair and correct, we will do so. But if it wants us to do as Kosovo does, we will prepare ourselves to elaborate at the next meeting about what has been done throughout history.

The Serbian tragedy lies in the fact that the Serbian Orthodox council is in Kosovo holding a meeting. Why? Because it is the headquarters of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Patriarchate. It is because Serbia was established in Kosovo. Please, do not force me to speak about this. Ms. Çitaku cannot speak about this, because at the time they were not present in Kosovo. The battle for Kosovo was fought between Turkey and Serbia, in Kosovo. That does not mean that each and every Security Council meeting should be devoted to elaborating on all these topics. We should be very pragmatic and efficient. Whether they want to reconcile or not, they cannot achieve their goals without previous agreement with Serbia.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Ms. Vlora Çitaku has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Çitaku: It is unfortunate that, 17 years after the war — and I am talking here about a war that happened in the twentieth century — we see no remorse, regret or apology. I was a teenager during the war, and my colleague from Serbia was a senior State official. The least once should do is apologize for the atrocities and for the lives lost. Serbia caused the most horrific catastrophe in Europe since the Second World War. And we have yet to see condemnation of those atrocities, not only in Kosovo but also in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is a very bipolar approach. You cannot say that you are for reconciliation when we do not address the past. We can build a joint future in the region only if we speak in earnest about what happened, if we are honest about what happened.

To claim today that I am not a Kosovar or a citizen of Kosovo, or that Albanians did not live in Kosovo is pitiful. We do not have to stop at the fourteenth century; we can go further back. But that is an argument for other forums. This is a Chamber where we discuss resolution 1244 (1999), and our point has been consistently clear. Resolution 1244 (1999) no longer fits the reality, and we all know why it cannot be replaced — for political reasons.

At the end of the day, it was the International Court of Justice, the highest international legal body, that stated very clearly that Kosovo did not breach international law when it declared independence. It also stated very clearly that States exist for their citizens, and not the other way around. If you consistently repress, oppress and commit genocide, ethnic cleansing and mass murder, what is the justification of that State for maintaining control of that population? The opinion of the Court is public, so when I hear my colleague here saying all the time that he hopes that every single country in the world that has recognized Kosovo goes through what Serbia has gone through, I say: "I hope not". I hope that no people in the world will suffer and go through what we have gone through.

We hear all the time about the 200,000 Serbs who left Kosovo. I want to reiterate that every single citizen of Kosovo is free to return — every single one of them. We have gone to great lengths and adopted unprecedented measures to accommodate the needs of all minority communities in Kosovo. We have reserved seats in Parliament. We have them as Ministers in the Government. There is sufficient budget allocated to meet their needs. But what they need to hear from Serbia is a message that Kosovo is their State and that Pristina is the address where they can resolve their problems. This ambiguity must end, because we can discuss many things but there is one thing we will never discuss — our right to exist as a free nation under the sun. Our independence is irreversible. Kosovo is a State. Of course it has problems, like any newborn. But I urge people to come and visit Kosovo and see with their own eyes the progress we have managed to make together.

We have also heard references made here to Mr. Limaj's case. Mr. Limaj was indicted by the Basic Court, as confirmed by the Presiding Trial Judge of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, and he was found innocent. That is justice, and unlike other people we do not argue about the findings of the Court.

There was a reference made to a church built in the centre of Pristina. Now, while we do not support any form of vandalism, let me say that this church is not a historic site. The church was built during the Milošević regime. It is not a part of the cultural heritage; it is a political statement. Of course we will work closely with the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo to find an appropriate solution, but let us describe things as they are. We want peace. We want good-neighbourly relations. We want reconciliation. But those cannot be built on denial.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7694

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7694th meeting

Tuesday, 24 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)

Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture

Letter dated 9 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/428)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture

Letter dated 9 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/428)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Portugal, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Rwanda, South Africa, the Sudan, Sweden, Turkey and Thailand to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; Mr. Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan and South Sudan; and His Excellency Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. João Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/428, which contains a letter dated 9 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Secretary-General, I wish to thank Egypt and you, Sir, for bringing us together today for this timely discussion.

I will limit myself to making four points.

First, on this tenth anniversary of the annual consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, we should look back over those 10 years and measure the progress achieved to strengthen our partnership in maintaining peace and security on the continent. Indeed, in their first joint communiqué of 2007 (S/2007/386, annex), the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council committed to the development of a stronger and more structured relationship, and underlined the particular importance of support for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Ten years later, I am glad to bear witness to the fact that one of APSA's key pillars, the African Standby Force, is about to be declared operational at the African Union Summit in July. This progress has made been through a series of phases in the context of the so-called African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises and on the basis of a strong collaboration with the United Nations in the development of key policy and guiding documents, as well as at the practical level in the planning for the AMANI Africa II Field Training Exercises, all of which were key milestones in the operationalization of the African Standby Force.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly underscored that strengthening global and regional partnerships is absolutely critical, especially in Africa, where the United Nations clearly must continue to work very closely with the African Union to maintain peace and security on the continent. But it is only through concrete instances of collaboration that progress in building mutual trust becomes tangible, leading to an upgrading of the level of cooperation. This brings me to my second point. Several milestones have signaled this change of nature in the partnership between the two organizations on peace and security matters.

First, by issuing its new road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture from 2016 to 2020, the African Union has clearly moved away from ad hoc activity-based responses towards a more strategic position.

Secondly, the African Union and its regional economic communities and mechanisms have significantly strengthened their capacities over the past decade, while seeking to leverage the comparative advantages of each organization and consistently recognized the primary responsibility of the African Union for the regional mechanisms. African regional partners are involved in peace efforts across the continent, often facing significant human costs, as illustrated by the case of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Thirdly, as Council members know, a joint United Nations-African Union framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security will be signed by the Secretary-General and the African Union Commission Chairperson in 2016. In that respect, the United Nations-African Union relationship is graduating from an earlier support-and-capacity-building model. The partnership is much stronger now, based on a common vision of purpose and the efforts to be undertaken. Indeed, the strategic partnership has made considerable progress through its specific coordination arrangements. This can be clearly in the Joint Task Force developed as a cooperation mechanism between the decision-making bodies of both secretariats to manage conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

This has led to some important decisions, including the recent establishment in Addis Ababa of a joint working group on sustainable financing; the effectiveness of AMISOM, particularly in relation to command and control; and support for the Somali National Security Forces, in the context of the upcoming elections and the reduction of European funding. More generally, the Joint Task Force has increasingly encouraged proposals to help the African Union and the United Nations coordinate messaging. Members will have noted the recent increase in and regularity of joint communiqués on issues in which we have a shared interest. There has also been far more information-sharing, joint analyses and follow-up of developments on upcoming elections or crisis situations in Africa.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been lending support to the African Union-led facilitation efforts led by Mr. Edem Kodjo. Beyond the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and the African Union have maintained a strategic engagement between the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and the AU High-Level Implementation Panel aimed at advancing a peaceful resolution of the outstanding issues between the Sudan and South Sudan, where the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the High Representative of the African Union, former President Konaré, are working closely together and with the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to advance the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

My third point relates to the trend of growing cooperation between our two organizations on the ground, including, as I have said, the planning and management of peace support operations and support for greatly increased African Union institutional capacity in this regard. This area of cooperation has been the most active of our partnership recently. Specific achievements in these areas include, as I have already mentioned, support for the development of AMISOM strategic concepts of operations and the drafting of revised strategic directives for AMISOM leadership. We have also made strenuous joint planning efforts to ensure the deployment and management of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and the African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic. All of that was followed by transition planning to facilitate a smooth hand-over from the African Union to the United Nations.

Turning to Somalia, cooperation with the African Union is clearly a cornerstone of our collective efforts, and remains a model of partnership that we should tirelessly try to improve and enhance. We will therefore continue to work together with Somali leaders to bring the country out of the conflict that has plagued it for over two decades and make decisive progress towards peace. In this year of elections, it is more important than ever to work hand in hand. Once again, we remain fully committed to supporting AMISOM.

The African Union, directly or not, is the most important partner of the United Nations when it comes to peacekeeping. Three simple statistics will serve to illustrate that fact. Out of 16 United Nations peacekeeping missions, 9 are deployed in Africa; 80 per cent of all our uniformed peacekeepers serve in Africa; and more than 50 per cent of all contingents throughout the world come from African Union member States. That serves to demonstrate the absolute need for a strong partnership to be able to put an end to all those conflicts and provide support for peacebuilding.

I have no doubt that the Security Council will join me in expressing profound gratitude to all of the African countries that are contributing with troops and police to peacekeeping operations. They are working relentlessly and with courage in incredibly difficult circumstances to restore peace and stability in volatile environments, risking their lives every day — as we unfortunately see all too regularly from the painful statistics, as we mentioned to Members States last week during the annual meeting on Blue Helmets. We should therefore pay tribute to their efforts and to the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We, the United Nations and the African Union, need to relentlessly pursue our efforts to provide our peacekeepers with the necessary training and equipment to strengthen their security and improve their performance, all the while ensuring that they adhere to the highest level of conduct and discipline expected of them and observe the values and principles that our respective organizations are committed to.

That brings me to my fourth and final point, and I shall conclude quickly. With a view to further enhancing all those efforts and our partnership, the Secretary-General has called for more predictable and sustainable financing and support to African Union peace support operations authorized by the Security Council. I am pleased to inform members that the United Nations-African Union joint review on financing and support to African Union peace operations will be launched tomorrow, when a technical seminar will begin by evaluating the various United Nations models of support to date. That will feed into the process carried out by the High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund, Mr. Donald Kaberuka, to enhance predictable financing.

A review of re-hatting experiences in Mali and the Central African Republic has shown that predictable financing remains critical to the success of transitions from African Union peace operations to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The review also confirmed the fact that no support modality is sufficient on its own. In that regard, there is a need to pursue efforts to optimize the full range of support modalities, including, as I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, the timely operationalization of the African Standby Force. Let us bear in mind that this is a critical issue in strengthening collective security together. A more effective African Union, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, will make it possible for the United Nations itself to further and better respond to situations on the ground and the needs of Member States. Ultimately, financing is part of a broader partnership. We therefore remain firmly committed to support all the efforts of the African Union to build capacity on mission planning and support, as well as standards and performance. Once again, financing is part of that global vision.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. António:

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the African Union Commission, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also commend you on your initiative to convene this timely open debate a day after the tenth annual consultative meeting between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council of the United Nations, as well as on the eve of the fifty-third anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of the African Unity, forerunner of the African Union. I also welcome the presence in New York of the members of the Peace and Security Council, a delegation led by its Chair, Ambassador Mmamosadinyana Molefe, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Botswana to the African Union.

The increasingly important role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security is a major feature of the post-Cold War international security landscape. Regional organizations now have a central place in the international security architecture and are viewed as key elements of security in their respective regions. That reality is nowhere more evident that in Africa. The transition from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union (AU) was certainly the most remarkable development in Africa, given its major implications it has had at the international level. In that context, the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture has made it possible for the African Union and its regional mechanisms to become major players in international peace support missions. They are the first responders to security crises and armed conflicts and the initiators of political processes that have made it possible to provide those operations with mandates. They are also the largest troop contributors. That recasting has been based on the significant changes that have occurred in the African security landscape, the evolution of which has been difficult to predict or to control.

Those developments have had a positive impact on the African Union-United Nations partnership over the past ten years. The strategic relationship between the African Union and the United Nations has continued to grow with a view to building a more coherent and effective partnership within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and article 17 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

This strategic partnership has in particular allowed our two organizations to maintain regular consultations on issues of concern and of mutual interest in the area of peace and security, where collaboration has been the most extensive. Regular consultations between the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the United Nations Security Council, along with the ever closer coordination between the AU Commission and the United Nations Secretariat, well illustrate the shared will to foster greater synergy between the African Union and the United Nations. In that regard, the convening yesterday of the tenth annual consultative meeting between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council produced a joint assessment of the state of the partnership between the two Councils, 10 years after its establishment. It highlighted the need for a profound reorganization of this mechanism with a view to its readjustment, readaptation and strengthening to ensure its viability and its effectiveness.

Particular emphasis was placed on the founding elements of a true strategic partnership that the PSC wishes to build with the United Nations Security Council, based on the following: the principle of mutual respect, the taking into account of comparative advantages of the two Councils, the need to adopt methods of work that are clearly set out, orientation towards action and results, and an approach having a strategic and comprehensive character that truly integrates all issues of peace and security in Africa. There should be a spirit of shared responsibility, cooperation and close coordination.

The peace operations review process conducted by the United Nations last year also provided an opportunity to review our relationship with a view to ensuring greater flexibility and predictability and so that we could guarantee sustainable financing for the peace operations carried out jointly by the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms in Africa. That undertaking was all the more necessary because the African Union and its regional mechanisms continue to play an increasingly dominant role in the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent, notably through the deployment of peacekeeping operations.

Indeed, if the peacekeeping operations of the African Union are deployed effectively, they will be able to better pave the way for the deployment of United Nations operations, which in their turn could support long-term stabilization activities in the countries concerned. However, African Union operations still suffer the lack of predictable, flexible and sustainable financing and depend to a significant extent on the voluntary support of international partners.

While it is true that the African Union very much appreciates the support it receives from its partners, it is also true that the lack of predictability, flexibility and, increasingly, sustainability of financing has had negative consequences for the effectiveness of operations carried out by the African Union. In that regard, the financial, operational and logistical difficulties of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), if appropriate responses are not found — to cite one example — will certainly have negative implications on the eve of decisive political and security schedules for the future of the country. We are of the view that AMISOM has added value as the first African Union mission to combat terrorism, an experience that the rest of the world could share.

The African Union believes that using assessed contributions from the United Nations budget should be considered a viable option in the spirit of burden-sharing between the two organizations. Concurrently, we are aware that it will also be necessary for Africa to mobilize increased resources on the continent so that it can finance its own peace operations. The Heads of State and Government of the African Union have made a commitment to finance about 25 per cent of the peacekeeping operations conducted by the African Union. That decision will be gradually implemented so that it reaches an optimal operational level by 2020. This will therefore mean that 75 per cent of the budgets of missions carried out with Security Council authorization will be supported by the United Nations through assessed contributions. As Mr. Ladsous has already said, Mr. Kaberuka, the special envoy of the chair of the commission on the issue, will work towards that objective.

It is appropriate to highlight once again that the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the area of peace is in constant evolution. We should ensure the optimal use of opportunities and available resources, thanks to the intervention of actors who can act with better advantage on the ground in the search for solutions. The ultimate objective is the prevention or the resolution of conflicts, no matter how or when they emerge.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. António for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Menkerios.

Mr. Menkerios: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council in this open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security. I thank Egypt as President of the Security Council for bringing us together today for this timely debate, and for the discussions between the two Councils yesterday as well.

While much progress has been made to address conflicts in Africa, threats to international peace and security in the continent remain real and numerous. The findings and recommendations of the recent high-level reviews of United Nations peace operations and of peacebuilding architecture emphasize the imperative for strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly with the African Union. This is based on the recognition that no single organization can succeed on its own in addressing the challenges that confront us. The United Nations values cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. In the past decade, regional and subregional organizations have gained greater influence over conflict dynamics and regional politics.

My office, the United Nations Office to the African Union, is a critical bridge in supporting and strengthening the rapidly evolving cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in peace and security. We are already reaping the dividends of our partnership. Working closely with the African Union and with regional economic communities and mechanisms, we have made significant progress in enhancing consultations, harmonizing positions and jointly engaging in international efforts to avert open conflict and to manage ongoing ones in many parts of the continent. Increasingly, the United Nations has been working hand-in-hand with the African Union and regional mechanisms to stabilize volatile situations throughout the continent, from the Lake Chad Basin to Somalia, Burundi and the Sahel. The 2016-2020 road map of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) emphasizes coherence and coordination across all pillars of the APSA, and between the AU and its regional mechanisms, and provides a coherent approach for strengthening joint peace and security actions with the United Nations.

In recent weeks, the United Nations and the African Union have acted together to de-escalate political tensions in the Comoros. Concerted United Nations and African Union engagements with the parties in the Comoros show the value of having the international community speak with one voice on an issue to encourage restraint and promote peaceful outcomes to disputes. Those efforts should continue, and I am convinced that they will.

In Burundi, we are working with the African Union, the East African Community and other partners to support the parties to engage in an inclusive dialogue, the only way to resolve their differences in a sustainable manner. The Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union need to continue to work together to encourage Burundians to find a durable solution to their crisis.

Yesterday the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the AU held their tenth annual consultations. The two Councils met informally in Addis Ababa in February, with a focus on the situation in Burundi alone. We commend the growing relationship between the two Councils, as it helps build synergies, coordinate positions and promote the adoption of resolutions that are mutually supportive. To enhance the value of the growing strategic partnership between our two organizations, the Secretariat is working with the African Union Commission to systematize working-level consultations, share information, support joint training and carry out joint exercises on early warning and conflict prevention. As part of our efforts, we are working on a holistic approach that will elevate the partnership from an ad-hoc arrangement to a more institutionalized approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution. In that regard, we are finalizing a joint United Nations-African Union framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security. I am hopeful that the two Heads of the two organizations will sign the framework before the end of the year.

The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/682) call for a stronger overall partnership to ensure that the Councils can draw on a more resilient and capable network of actors, while continuing to stress the need for the African Union to have access to predictable and sustainable funding. The reports also call on the United Nations and the AU to strengthen conflict prevention and mediation capacities.

The African Union has built, and continues to put in place, the African Peace and Security Architecture, underpinned by the realization that conflicts are resolved through political solutions. Our collective challenge is to support and strengthen the Architecture, particularly the African Standby Force and the African Union's preventive diplomacy and mediation capabilities. I am more hopeful than ever that efforts to strengthen the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations will remain critical to the ongoing quest for security and stability in Africa. I wish the Council fruitful deliberations and look forward to the outcomes of this open debate and suggestions on how we can take them forward.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Menkerios for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kamau.

Mr. Kamau: I would like to begin by commending you, Sir, for having organized this important and timely open debate on the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. We appreciate the detailed concept note (S/2016/428, annex) to guide this debate. I also thank you, Sir, for having invited me to brief this meeting in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I would also like recognize the presence of the members of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at today's meeting, and I too extend my welcome to them to New York.

Over the past decade, the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and other subregional organizations in Africa has grown significantly, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Our cooperation in the area of peace and security has been critical to our collective progress and achievements. Today's debate provides us an opportunity to review the status of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. On 27 April, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted identical resolutions — namely, General Assembly resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016) respectively — on the review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Those resolutions are comprehensive and far-reaching documents. They have introduced the notion of sustaining peace and the importance of national, regional and international efforts aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. Those resolutions have further strengthened the foundation of our cooperation.

Current global realities include an increasing number of violent conflicts, exacerbated by the deepening refugee crisis, rising terrorist threats and violent extremism. There is clearly a need to focus on conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflict. The primacy of politics should guide our collective work in peace operations. We must not let situations deteriorate into violent conflicts for us in order to react with security or military measures. We need to change our mindset away from military engagements and towards the prevention of conflicts. We can achieve that through horizon-scanning, shared joint analysis, dialogue, mediation and accompaniment in situations of crisis. We must re-focus our work on conflict resolution rather than on conflict management. That is the essence of our collective efforts for sustaining peace.

The peace and security challenges that we face are too extremely complex and interlinked for any single organization to address them alone. They call for collective action. To succeed in our goal of sustaining peace, we need to reframe and reprioritize our responses. We must never forget that peace is at the core of that for which the Charter stands for. It must run through all our collective efforts, ranging from conflict prevention to peacebuilding, peacekeeping, reconstruction and, indeed, sustainable development. That renewed approach to sustainable peace would allow us to best adapt to today's global realities. Rather than wait until a crisis breaks out and then make a default or template recourse in the form of a response, we need to integrate sustaining peace in our security, development and human-rights agenda. We feel that we cannot emphasize that point enough.

The twin resolutions I just mentioned foresee a Peacebuilding Commission that is proactively focused on assisting countries to prevent conflict and sustain peace. The PBC is expected to become a more efficient and flexible convening platform for policy dialogue and for availing all countries that seek the support of the United Nations for achieving sustainable peace an opportunity to work through that platform. We are fully committed to making that a reality. In our commitment, we will continue to strengthen national ownership and leadership in our engagement, because we are convinced that the responsibility for sustaining peace is shared between the Government and all national stakeholders, including youth, women and civil society.

The new resolutions on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture also stress the importance of the partnerships and cooperation between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. The Peacebuilding Commission has been working closely with the African Union and the regional economic communities in Africa to increase synergies, enhance coherence and complementarity of our joint peacebuilding efforts. For instance, we have been able to work closely and, speaking in one voice, to complement our joint efforts to sustain peace in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Burundi. Similarly, over the past year the Commission has increased its focus on thematic, cross-cutting and regional peacebuilding challenges.

The Commission held regional discussions on peacebuilding in West Africa in January and April this year. Those discussions provided a unique opportunity to look at the growing cross-border challenges beyond the confines of specific countries. The discussions also centred on strategies to address the challenges that arise when working with the countries in the region, as well as when working within and in concert with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Development Bank and other international and regional actors. We are looking forward to further strengthening and deepening this partnership in view of the new road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture. We are aware that this road map would provide a framework for practical measures to reorient the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework.

The Peacebuilding Commission intends to use the momentum generated from these new resolutions, and the commitment of the Security Council and the General Assembly, to further enhance and institutionalize cooperation with the African Union. We will aim to arrive at an agreed framework for further consultations, exchange of information and analysis, and opportunities for joint initiatives aimed at sustaining peace in Africa.

I am planning to lead a delegation of the Peacebuilding Commission to West Africa in mid-June, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Senegal, to draw attention to the peacebuilding priorities and needs within the context of post-Ebola recovery. Our visit to Senegal, the current chair of ECOWAS, will provide an opportunity to discuss the regional peacebuilding challenges and priorities.

As we work together to strengthen our partnership, we also intend to leave no one behind. We must focus on the inclusive participation of young people in our peacebuilding efforts. It is evident that investing in young people guarantees peace and security, as well as development. It is our responsibility to provide young people with the opportunity to play their rightful role in peacebuilding and development.

Similarly, we must also acknowledge the importance of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. We must particularly include gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to sustaining peace, and promote the gender dimensions of peacebuilding, including through the strengthening of women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. Importantly, we also intend to work very closely with Mr. Donald Kaberuka in the context of the African Peace Fund. We also look forward to working with him and to achieving greater success in raising additional funds for both the African Peace Fund and the broader Peacebuilding Fund of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In conclusion, we must link our joint peacebuilding efforts to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly A/RES/70/1) and the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The opportunities contained in these mutually reinforcing and coherent frameworks must be supported to achieve inclusive growth, sustained development and peace and security for Africa.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Kamau for his briefing.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2016/8.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by commending the Egyptian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate, as well as for the concept note (S/2016/428, annex) that was circulated in order to provide input for this discussion. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous; the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Mr. Téte António; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, Mr. Haile Menkerios; and the Permanent Representative of Kenya and Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Macharia Kamau, for their briefings.

I also take this opportunity to highlight today's adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8 on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security.

The growing number and complexity of current conflicts presents a series of challenges. That is evidenced by the continued increase in demand for peacekeeping operations. In recent years, the number of Blue Helmets deployed has reached an unprecedented level. The great majority of peacekeeping operations — almost 90 per cent of uniformed personnel — are deployed in Africa and, as Mr. Ladsous pointed out minutes ago, over 80 per cent of the annual peacekeeping budget is used there, often in situations where there is no peace to keep and where there are a number of asymmetrical threats posed by non-State actors whose relationships with transnational criminal organizations have made it very difficult to isolate and address problems.

These growing threats to international peace and security are developing in a context in which the financial resources of the United Nations in general, and of Member States in particular, add another layer of difficulty, requiring the greatest possible efficiency in the use of those resources. Therefore, the need to efficiently address the complexity of these threats and to find solutions make partnerships with international actors, in particular regional and subregional organizations, increasingly important.

New threats to international peace and security, and grave existing humanitarian crises require, now more than ever before, the development of close regional and global alliances that will make more effective responses possible. Such alliances should respect the competencies of each organization, maximize synergies and promote complementarity. That is why we agree that now is the time to discuss and agree on a clearer framework for such cooperation, which is particularly urgent for our ties with the African Union.

It is no coincidence that the recent reviews of the United Nations peace and security architecture have reached the same conclusion — that the challenges of the twenty-first century are too broad and complex to be addressed solely within the scope of the United Nations. That is why it is necessary to revitalize the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations in order to more effectively guarantee international peace and security. The review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture highlights the importance of cooperation with regional structures. That includes cooperation with the African Union as, nowadays, all of the countries for which the Peacebuilding Commission has country-specific configurations are African countries.

In addition, at the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations it has been recognized that, among other things, regional organizations have the potential to offset the United Nations deficit in rapid-response capacity. Similarly, the forces of the region have on many occasions proved to be essential in initially responding to crises and bringing to bear important understandings of local realities. They also provide a direct link in terms of influence and regional political authority.

Nevertheless, we always need to ensure that there is strict respect for the principle of impartiality. That has at times been somewhat of a challenge given that, in the close relationships that exist between different regional entities, there can sometimes be a clash between the national interests of the countries of the region.

The idea presented in the concept note for this debate to take up the recommendations of the Panel with regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is very timely, in particular when it comes to strengthening the strategic alliance between the United Nations and the African Union. In that regard, my delegation views favourably the Panel's recommendation to ensure that the formulation of peace-operation mandates should involve closer collaboration. To that end, the Security Council and the Secretariat should make a commitment to ensuring that more dialogue and closer coordination takes place with the relevant regional organizations before a mandate is authorized. That is particularly true when a regional operation has been deployed, or is about to be deployed. In that contex, the Security Council should turn more frequently to the advice and experience of regional partners.

It would also be timely to assess the possibility of gradually harmonizing the policies and norms that regulate United Nations peacekeeping operations with the norms applicable to other peace operations mandated by the Security Council, especially with regard to the protection of civilians. The relationship between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union should be further strengthened through increased interaction and consultation so as to make it possible to develop a common understanding of conflicts and to formulate commons strategies.

The Ramos Horta report (see S/2015/446) indicates that one of the major weaknesses of the current system is related to the status of the financing of the strategic alliance. Therefore, the United Nations and the African Union should join forces to undertake joint efforts in order to establish sustainable, predictable and flexible mechanisms that are capable of supporting African Union peace operations. It is also worth recalling that the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (see/2015/490), entitled "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace", also highlights that efforts in peacebuilding need to be supported through the allocation of predictable and sustained resources.

I would like to express support for the principles of cooperation that the High-level Panel proposed. Those principles are the basis for a strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and can also serve as a benchmark for future collaboration between the United Nations and other regional organizations. They include the process of adopting decisions through consultation and a common strategy; a division of labour based on respective comparative advantages; analysis, planning, monitoring and joint evaluation; an integrated response to the conflict cycle, including prevention; and transparency, accountability and respect for international norms.

Bearing in mind the significant existing challenges that we face, actions aimed at strengthening regional alliances should not undermine the participation and contribution of non-regional actors to peacekeeping operations deployed in Africa.

I would also like to highlight that the new African Peace and Security Architecture road map for the period 2016-2020 is an excellent tool that clarifies the role of each actor involved in the peace and security architecture on the continent. It establishes indicators and specific objectives in five priority areas, namley, conflict prevention, crisis and conflict management, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, strategic security and coordination and partnerships.

In conclusion, Uruguay would like to reiterate its commitment to the process for the review of peacekeeping operations. We are convinced of the need for the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to be fully discussed as soon as possible. The United Nations peacekeeping system is still far from being prepared to deal effectively with today's complex and changing international scenario, and it is our obligation to take urgent measures in that regard.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the various briefers for their introductory statements, which were very enlightening. I would also like to thank Egyptian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this important debate.

The Security Council has just returned from Somalia. The operation deployed there — the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) — is the most tangible example of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, but it is far from being the only one. I will make three comments in that regard.

First, regional organizations have become key partners for the implementation of peace operations. That is one of the main conclusions from the reports on peace operations and peacebuilding. It is an irrefutable fact. African organizations working in the context of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture are increasingly shouldering their responsibility in the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Their political role in acting as mediator and providing support has increased, as illustrated, for example, by the role played by the East African Community in Burundi and by the Economic Community of Central African States in the Central African Republic under the mediation of the President of the Republic of the Congo. The latter made possible the successful conclusion of the political transition in the Central African Republic.

Those organizations also play a welcome military role in complementing United Nations peacekeeping operations, as shown during the transition from the African-led International Support Mission to Mali to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; and from the African Union-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; as well as in the specific role played by African forces in AMISOM and in the joint multinational task force on combating terrorism. On behalf of France, I would like to pay tribute to the African forces who every day serve peace on the continent under conditions that are often very difficult and at a heavy price.

I would like to add that, for the Security Council, dialogue with regional organizations should become a reflexive instinct. Such dialogue is in the interests of all, and above all in the interest of peace. It should enable us to forge a consensus that puts forward the initiatives of the African Union or of a subregional organization, when one exists.

Secondly, France would therefore like to encourage a greater role and a growing recognition of the African Union and other regional organizations in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. France welcomes the strengthening of the links between the African Union and the United Nations through the establishment of liaison offices in New York and Addis Ababa. Another example is through institutionalizing the annual exchanges between Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, such as the one we held yesterday here in New York. All those initiatives are essential.

At the bilateral level, France is one of the main partners of the African Union in strengthening African peace capacities.France contributes every year to the training of tens of thousands of soldiers, with more than 29,000 African soldiers trained in 2015. Among those trained by France and engaged in operations, nearly 30 per cent were deployed in AMISOM. France is also deploying, in support of the African forces and United Nations peacekeeping operations, national operations in the Sahel and the Central African Republic, which are financed by its national budget.

Our debate on cooperation with regional organizations would not be complete if we did not recognize the decisive role played by the European Union, of which there are many examples. Since 2007, the European Union has financed AMISOM in the amount of €1.1 billion. The European Union also financially supports the African Peace and Security Architecture. Many missions, such as the European Union Capacity Building Mission, the European Union military operation and the European Union Training Mission, are deployed on the continent and on its shores in support of African States. In terms of regional organizations, there is a genuine strategic tripartite partnership among the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, which is being established with France's full support.

Thirdly and lastly, in this context, we must continue to engage with determination in strengthening this strategic partnership. It is essential for the United Nations to fully engage early on in defining a comprehensive and coordinated crisis management framework, both from the political and security viewpoints. The example of the situation in Mali demonstrates this well. The United Nations is intervening in a context in which the regional dimension is crucial, following an African Union operation and in support of the implementation of a peace agreement that was negotiated in the region. All of these dimensions are inextricably linked.

In this regard, the issues of transitions between successive missions and coordination among simultaneous missions are areas that require special attention. In this connection, bringing those involved up to United Nations standards, the training of regional contingents and greater awareness on human rights issues seem to us of utmost importance in the context of United Nations peacekeeping.

Finally, the financial sustainability of military operations remains a major concern. Today, the African Union is heavily dependent on external contributions to finance its operations. The goal is for African organizations to be able to gradually take over an increasing share of the funding of their action. Presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8, which we have just adopted, reflects the issues we are discussing today. France is determined to continue its efforts and cooperation with the United Nations and the African Union, as well as all regional organizations, in this direction.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): I want to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate to discuss the major issue of United Nations-African Union cooperation. We commend your delegation, Sir, for choosing to convene this meeting at this very opportune time on the heels of yesterday's anniversary of the tenth joint meeting between the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

This meeting also follows the most recent Council mission to Africa, which was its third this year. During its Somalia leg, Council members had a valuable opportunity to see directly on the ground and better appreciate a very decent pattern of African Union-United Nations cooperation in the area of peace and security, exemplified by the effective teamwork of the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. It also allowed us to identify inevitable shortcomings and discuss the ways to address them.

We thank the briefers for their comprehensive presentations, which gave us a dynamic picture of lively cooperation between the two organizations. We also welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8 at this meeting.

From the outset, I would like to note that Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Over the past decade, the role of the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations in promoting peace and sustainable development among African States has increased exponentially. The African Union has demonstrated its ability to take the lead in the effective resolution of conflicts and its views and policies on this matter are of particular value for the United Nations. The launch of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the establishment of its structures, as well as the deployment of the African Union's peace support operations authorized by the Security Council, are a clear testimony to the growing importance of enhancing United Nations-AU cooperation.

In recent years, the African Union has proved to be a valuable partner of the United Nations. On many occasions, the African Union and its member States have been able to step in promptly to help maintain peace and security or bring in a measure of stability in crisis situations. The African Union's presence also has the extra benefit of providing additional political legitimacy and leverage to international peace operations. We value very much the readiness of the African Union to tackle problematic or sensitive issues head on, especially when the United Nations is not able to act expeditiously.

The African Union's response to the crisis in Somalia and Mali come to mind in this respect. Another case in point in our view is the situation in Burundi. There, my delegation believes that the deployment of a robust and meaningful United Nations police presence would be very much in accordance with our shared goal of preventing a further escalation of this crisis. In this light, we call for increased consultations between the two Councils and the broader use of preventive diplomacy tools and mechanisms, as envisaged by resolution 1625 (2005).

One of our common threats is terrorism, especially as we see the rise of new types of terrorism-related threats to international peace and security. We call for greater unity and stronger international partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in combating this dangerous phenomenon, including in particular through effective implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is also important to enhance our cooperation to cut off the sources of financing for terrorism and to prevent the supply of arms to terrorists.

In recent years, we have seen progress in developing the strategic relationships between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security. At the same time, we have to admit that challenges remain and that more should be done to further strengthen this relationship to effectively address common collective security concerns in Africa.In this context, Ukraine welcomes the new African Peace and Security Architecture road map 2016-2020, aimed at greater coordination and cohesion between the United Nations and the AU in fulfilling their priority tasks. The presidential statement that was just adopted also serves this purpose well.

Last year, the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, in its report (S/2015/446), called for the United Nations to deepen its strategic partnership with the African Union through consultative decision-making and common strategy. Therefore, we look forward to the finalization in 2016 by the Secretariat and the AU Commission of a joint United Nations-AU framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security. This instrument will provide a blueprint for early and sustainable engagement between our Organizations before, during and after conflict. In the most recent United Nations-AU communiqué (S/2015/212, annex), it was agreed to conduct a joint field mission to a conflict situation or area in Africa, to be identified through consultations during 2015. However, such a mission did not take place and we look forward to revisiting this effort in the course of 2016.

As we look at the African Union flag, we can see the white colour representing Africa's desire to have true friends around the world. Africa can continue to fully count on Ukraine as its reliable friend and strong advocate of peace, democracy and development on the continent. As Ukraine has applied for observer status in the AU, we intend to use this perspective and enhanced relationship with the African Union to advance cooperation and dialogue on a broad range of issues, including security.

To conclude, I wish to use this opportunity to convey my cordial greetings on the occasion of Africa Day to be observed tomorrow.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation for Egypt's initiative in holding an open debate on this important topic. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and the Permanent Representative of Kenya in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for their comprehensive briefings.

Today I would like to talk about ownership and partnership. I would like to highlight the importance of African ownership supported by effective partnership through United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation.

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the central framework for the consolidation of peace in Africa. APSA embodies the vision of African solutions for African problems — in other words, ownership. Since its creation, APSA has had to adapt and adjust to complex developments in the field of peace and security in Africa. Accordingly, the areas of cooperation and coordination between the AU and the United Nations have both grown and diversified. In order to make APSA more effective under today's challenging circumstances, it is important to fully utilize the cooperative strengths, expertise and knowledge of the United Nations to promote these African solutions.

In this regard, the United Nations Office to the AU (UNOAU) plays a critical role in the United Nations-African Union partnership by providing crucial technical advice to the African Union Commission (AUC) on matters of capacity-building and operational support. United Nations-African Union joint planning and management, supported by the UNOAU's capacity-building efforts, have brought positive impacts to the transitions from AU-led peace operations to United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as from African-led International Support Mission to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and from the African-led International Support Mission to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Japan believes that further efforts by the UNOAU to build institutional capacity in APSA are crucial to bringing coherence to the consolidation of peace in Africa.

That said, partnership with the UNOAU cannot substitute for ownership on the part of the AU. The African Union Mission in Somalia, authorized by resolution 1744 (2007) pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, is a good example of such ownership.

The leading instruments of APSA are the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. These building-blocks of APSA are in a position to best understand the particular context behind any conflict within its scope. This is why, for example, the role played by the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau has been pivotal in maintaining security in that country. These examples show the unique strengths and proficiencies that regional and subregional organizations can bring to conflict resolution in Africa, and which neither individual countries nor the United Nations can provide.

The United Nations-African Union partnership has the potential to provide even greater impacts on the ground in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Japan believes that the impact of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework and the African Solidarity Initiative can be enhanced by coordinating the work of the Peacebuilding Commission with the African Union as elaborated in resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The UNOAU can also help enhance coordination between the AU Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

When we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Organization of African Unity/African Union in 2013, Japan reaffirmed that African ownership is the unshakable foundation of development in Africa. The year 2013 was also the twentieth anniversary of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process. Ownership, as I have highlighted today, is one of the underlying principles of TICAD. It is Africa that knows Africa's problems best and Africans who are the keenest for a solution, and it is Africa that will ultimately find the way forward. Japan has full confidence in Africa's capacities.

Africa is high on Japan's diplomatic agenda this year. In July, during our Council presidency, Japan will hold an open debate on peacebuilding in Africa. In August of this year, Japan, together with the AU Commission, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, will co-organize the TICAD VI Summit, which will be hosted by Kenya, making it the first time in its 23-year history that a TICAD summit is held on the African continent. We will fully utilize today's discussion in our preparations for these events.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Japan's strong commitment to ensuring peace and security in Africa.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate. I also thank all our briefers for what they have just told us.

I want to underscore the United Kingdom's commitment to the links between the African Union and the Security Council. I said it in the informal session and I will say it here: when we cooperate, we make a real difference. The corollary of that, of course, is that when we do not cooperate, we both lose.

I want to focus my remarks on one particular example of this. Others have alluded to it, but I wanted to go into it in a little bit more detail, because it matters so much. The example I have in mind is the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in Somalia. We touched on this subject in our formal meeting yesterday, but our time was limited.

Last week, the Security Council saw at first hand how our two organizations work together in that country to make a real difference to the lives of ordinary Somalis after a quarter of a century of conflict. I must pay tribute to the men and women of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The AMISOM contribution to peace and security in the country and the sacrifices it has made cannot be overstated.

I also welcome the contribution of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). UNSOS logistical support has been crucial to AMISOM's successes against Al-Shabaab. Working together, they are providing space for the political process, allowing the Special Representative and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to carry out their vital tasks. We are now discussing how to reinforce this within the United Nations.

AMISOM continues to play a vital role in underpinning security in Somalia and keeping the pressure on Al-Shabaab. In doing so, they are giving the Somali national security forces crucial time to develop so that those forces can eventually take up the AMISOM mantel. That process now needs to accelerate, in step with Somali's political transition to a federal future. But it is also critically important that troop-contributing countries stay the course, with the full backing of the Security Council. Early withdrawal would put at risk the brave and significant investment that they and regional partners have made in Somalia.

We all know that the long-term responsibility for Somalia's security rests with its own security forces. To succeed, they need the assistance of the international community — assistance that can help them build an inclusive and integrated Somali national army and police force. Yet one of the most striking things from last week's visit was how slow, fragmented and uncoordinated this effort can be. The Federal Government must articulate clearly the needs and gaps in support in order for donors to be able to help to the best of their ability. We need those who pledge assistance, training, equipment and funds to be transparent and coordinated in their approach as well. That is the only way to secure an effective, professional security force that can take on a greater share of responsibility for security in Somalia, and underpinning that effort must be sustainable financing for the Somali National Army. We must all encourage the efforts of the Federal Government towards greater transparency, and paying salaries on time is key to achieving that goal.

For all the gains of the past four years, it is clear that there is much more work to do. The year 2016 is critical for Somalia. It is a crucial milestone towards the democratic, representative future that Somalis so urgently and so desperately deserve. Just after the Council's visit to Somalia last week, the President took a vital step towards that future by approving the electoral model. I am pleased that the Council could welcome that through a press statement agreed yesterday. But that is just one step. Together, the United Nations and the African Union (AU) need to stay the course, so it is vital that the Council continue to support both AMISOM and UNSOS to help deliver the electoral process and security for all Somalis.

Let me close with one final, broader thought. Somalia shows what we can achieve when our two organizations work together and how important it is to continue to do so. But we know that there is so much more that can be done across Africa. Just think what we could achieve with even stronger cooperation on conflict analysis, on early warning and on mediation. Our efforts are heading in the right direction, but there is always room to do more. That means getting better at standing up, managing and eventually closing African Union-led peacekeeping operations, and as Hervé Ladsous said, it means moving AU missions to a more stable and sustainable financial footing. To do so, we need to see the AU deliver on its own commitment to contributing 25 per cent of AU mission costs by 2020, on which basis the United Nations would be able to regularize its own funding, which is in all our interests.

The work of Mr. Kaberuka, High Representative for the AU Peace Fund, on a road map for meeting that commitment is a very important step forward. We look forward to seeing concrete proposals for greater United Nations oversight of AU missions and greater accountability. Through those steps, not only will the finances of AU missions be regularized, but their performance and accountability will improve. That would make a substantial contribution to peace and security in Africa and would have a lasting benefit for so many people outside the Chamber.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): The convening of today's debate is timely, particularly with the presence in New York of the delegation of the African Union Peace and Security Council. We had a fruitful discussion yesterday and listened attentively to its members' expert knowledge on the situation in Africa. The comprehensive and detailed concept note (S/2016/428, annex) provides us with an insightful analysis, captures the political dynamics and argues for greater synergies between the African Union (AU) and the Council in order to pursue our common endeavour in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

I wish to thank all of the briefers for their respective presentations, which as a whole further augmented the need for closer collaboration between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. While we are encouraged by the significant gains and successes achieved to date, it is obvious that the common take from our regular deliberations on African issues concludes with the glaring fact that both sides would profit from a more effective and efficient partnership. That calls for our active collaboration on well-defined strategic objectives based on clearly defined divisions of responsibility. Given our shared assessments, calibrating appropriate responses together would complement our collective efforts. In that regard, comparative advantages, complementarity of mandates and optimal use of resources and capacities must also be taken into account.

Malaysia is pleased to join consensus on presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8, which was just adopted. The statement outlines measures in taking forward the outcomes of the recently concluded peacebuilding architecture review exercise, which is applicable to the United Nations-AU relationship and the African Peace and Security Architecture.

In aligning ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the delegation of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I wish to add the following points.

Managing conflict cannot prevail as a default approach on the part of either the United Nations or regional organizations, including the AU. The emphasis on primacy of politics should compel us to move towards a prevention-centred approach. To effect such a shift, efforts should be directed towards preventing conflicts from escalating into full-blown threats. In that connection, United Nations and AU preventive diplomacy measures and mechanisms should be more coordinated and geared towards enabling the early detection of potential crisis situations and by the early sharing of information.

The review of the peacebuilding architecture recognized the AU as a key partner of the Peacebuilding Commission and provided further impetus for collaboration between the PBC and the AU on peacebuilding efforts. In that regard, a focused engagement within the PBC and the AU Peace and Security Council is welcome, and its outcome should continue to fit into the broader United Nations-AU dialogue. Events such as the recent high-level meeting on the theme "Sustaining Peace: Mechanisms, Partnerships and the Future of Peacebuilding in Africa", provided an early opportunity to unpack Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262. Further opportunities towards their implementation should be pursued.

The foundation and pillars underpinning the African Peace and Security Architecture are strong and forward-looking. A significant constraint in realizing its full potential is therefore the lack of necessary resources, particularly flexible, sustainable and predictable funding. In welcoming African efforts in that regard, we also believe that the United Nations could assist further. In doing its part, Malaysia recently pledged a modest contribution of 400,000 Malaysian ringgit to the Peacebuilding Fund. We hope that it will go towards supporting programmes and initiatives on sustaining peace and stability in Africa.

Last but not least, we are further encouraged to note the direct funding allocated in May by the Peacebuilding Fund to the AU Commission to support peacebuilding activities in Burundi as the first step of such progress. That is a groundbreaking step to strengthen cooperation between the AU and the United Nations in sustaining peace. The United Nations and the AU have come a long way in their collective efforts to build stronger cooperation. Lessons learned and best practices on cooperation should be regularly shared with a view to producing results oriented towards real operational benefits on the ground. We stand ready to contribute to that end.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to commend Egypt for its timely convening of this open debate on the crucial matter of maintaining international peace and security, United Nations-African Union (AU) peace and security cooperation and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

Let me thank the Egyptian delegation for the concept note (S/2016/428, annex) provided to guide our deliberations today and our briefers for their very concise and constructive contributions to this debate.

I also take the opportunity to welcome the African Union Peace and Security Council presence in New York to discuss strategic issues with the Security Council, with a view to strengthening cooperation between our organizations. That coincides with the tenth anniversary of the annual joint meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council, which was held very constructively yesterday.

Tomorrow the African continent will celebrate the fifty-third anniversary of the moment when 32 African leaders expressed their determination to promote the ideals of pan-Africanism, understanding and cooperation among the African peoples, and to create the conditions needed to establish and maintain peace and security on the continent. However, the pledges made at the time to establish justice and sustainable peace in Africa have still not materialized to this day and remain aspirations rather than reality for a good number of African countries and peoples.

The African continent is currently hosting 9 of the 16 peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, consisting of more than 90,000 troops and supported by more than 15,000 personnel. The African Union Peace and Security Council has deployed a considerable number of troops under Security Council mandates, which must render the two bodies' dialogue and cooperation necessary and more coordinated and effective, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Last year, the African Union deployed a road map for the African Peace and

Security Architecture for 2016 to 2020 as a strategic document, putting particular emphasis on deliveries by all stakeholders involved in the Peace and Security Architecture, including partners and external actors. The road map aims to cover the various phases of the conflict cycle through five strategic priorities — conflict prevention, conflict management, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, strategic security issues, and coordination and partnerships.

How can the Security Council support the successful implementation of those strategic priorities? And how can the outcomes of the 2015 reviews that the United Nations has conducted of its peacekeeping operations and architecture, and of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, be coordinated with implementation of the African Union road map and, more broadly, with the African Peace and Security Architecture? In trying to give answers to those questions, we will focus on the three phases of the conflict cycle — prevention, management and the post-conflict period. With regard to the prevention of conflict, the institutions and mechanisms of the African Peace and Security Architecture, such as the Peace and Security Council and the early-warning systems at both the continental and regional level, play a critical role through preventive diplomacy, mediation and electoral observation missions aimed at defusing any potential threats or risks to peace and security.

The 2015 reviews underscored the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict by involving all segments of society, promoting inclusive development and human rights and protecting fundamental individual and collective freedoms. They also emphasized the importance of addressing the specific concerns of young people, in order to promote harmonious development, and of ensuring women's equal participation in conflict prevention efforts and increasing their role in the decision-making process. During yesterday's discussion of the partnership between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, a consensus developed on the need to improve their collaboration in analysing and assessing threats, as well as their coordination of preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts. When, despite the best efforts of national stakeholders and the international community, a conflict cannot be avoided, the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council have additional reasons to join forces in helping the parties to that conflict to reach a political agreement in order to put an end to the hostilities and, if necessary, to resort to the use of force, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter.

Last year, the United Nations engaged in a review of its peacekeeping operations. The High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, chaired by José Ramos-Horta, former President of Timor-Leste, presented a comprehensive report (S/2015/446) focused on the changing nature of conflict, the evolving mandates of peace operations, managerial and administrative arrangements and difficulties, planning, partnerships, the protection of civilians and human rights, and special political missions. In particular, the African Union Peace and Security Council was extensively consulted and given an opportunity to lay out its common position and focus on the priorities for regional institutions in managing crises and conflicts — recognition of the Security Council's authority to authorize enforcement action and the need for constant consultations and exchange of information related to ongoing crises and conflicts and for mutual respect and complementarity.

The new, unprecedented threats faced by some African countries in 2013 led them to devise a solution to the delays in the operationalization of the African Standby Force, which was originally scheduled for 2008. The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis has been proposed by a number of African countries, including Angola, in order to fill the capability gap, find funding, provide ownership for African countries of conflict situations on the continent and come up with an immediate response to crises. It is not intended to replace the African Standby Force, and steps are being taken to harmonize it with the Standby Force's structure. The Security Council should be better informed and engaged about that process and should assess how it can better support it and render it operational.

Last month, the Security Council adopted resolution 2282 (2016), while the General Assembly adopted an identical resolution (70/262), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, extending the scope of peacebuilding to all phases of conflict, not just the post-conflict period. Noting that the 2016-2020 road map addresses peacebuilding, we would suggest that the African Union appropriate the new United Nations approach to peacebuilding, in order to adapt the African Peace and Security Architecture to today's challenges.

As the three reviews of the United Nations framework for peace have outlined, preventing conflict and implementing the principle of aid in the definition of sustaining peace are key to avoiding conflict — the unfulfilled aspiration first expressed more than 50 years ago and reiterated in the African Union's fiftieth anniversary Solemn Declaration, in which Africa's leaders stated their determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, now a pillar of the African Union's visionary Agenda 2063. Today's debate is therefore a timely one, and I am sure that our deliberations and the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/8) we adopted this morning will contribute to making Africa a more peaceful and prosperous continent, as we all desire.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): I thank our briefers this morning. We welcome this open debate and in particular the presence of our colleagues from the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The past 10 years have seen enormous growth in our relationship, and there is now a genuine consensus that the Security Council cannot carry out its mandate effectively without cooperating closely with the African Union (AU) and the regional economic communities. Integration with the African Peace and Security Architecture is key to this, as noted in each of the United Nations high-level reviews in 2015. Today, New Zealand would like to focus on two main areas.

First, we need to strengthen practical cooperation in preventing conflict, as other speakers have highlighted. In our view, the foundations are very good for cooperation on conflict prevention. One of the major strengths of the African Union and its subregional organizations is that they have dedicated significant resources and energy to identifying emerging crises and agreeing collective responses to prevent conflict. Good examples are the AU's early efforts on Burundi and the leadership of the Economic Community of West African States on Burkina Faso. Moreover, in our experience, the Secretariat and the AU Commission cooperate well at the institutional level to identify early warning indicators and develop recommendations for early action. There is, however, a lot more we can do.

As identified during a seminar on conflict prevention we hosted for Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council members in Addis Ababa last month, we need to be more joined up, and at an earlier stage. Effective conflict prevention requires early engagement and political will on the part of all actors, as well as unified messaging and coordinated action. What emerged at the seminar was that, at present, there is a lack of trust on many issues between key actors: the United Nations, the AU, subregional organizations and member States. This is a major obstacle to acting more effectively in cooperation, and is often rooted in differing conflict analyses and concerns about respect for sovereignty.

If we are to overcome these challenges, we need to begin from a basis of shared information and analysis about emerging crises and their causes, which can in turn lead to shared objectives and strategies for preventing conflict. We hope to see such cooperation in the coming months on emerging issues of mutual concern. Early engagement on the growing tensions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be a useful place to start. To do this, we will need to translate our rhetoric of partnership into practical and meaningful engagement between the two Councils on a more consistent basis.

We had a very good meeting yesterday canvassing some of these points, and New Zealand very much hopes that we can institutionalize regular informal engagement between the Councils that focuses on substantive action. Key focus areas could include the following: early joint analysis of emerging situations, setting out key facts and discussing interpretations and possible strategies so that all actors can discuss how to act in concert early and according their respective comparative advantage; and mandating and actively supporting information-sharing between the two Secretariats, increased resourcing for political analysis and conflict prevention, and actively discussing relevant information with Member States. We would like to see regular informal discussions between the two Councils — be through the Presidents, troikas or the full Councils — to build common understandings on crisis situations and agree on common objectives and credible responses. We also support and deploying joint AU-United Nations field missions, where possible, at both the secretariat and Council levels. In this regard, New Zealand supports a joint mission withe Peace and Security Council to South Sudan, in support of effective implementation of the Peace Agreement.

The other important issue that New Zealand wishes to highlight this morning is that of the financing of AU peace operations. We share the view that there is a strong need for a more sustainable model, and hope that the international community, including the United

Nations, can be strategic and creative in working out how to properly support Council-mandated missions that the African Union is prepared to lead. The urgent need to make progress in this regard was underlined again during the Council's visit to Somalia last week.

New Zealand welcomes the efforts of the AU to mobilize funding from within Africa. We are realistic about capacity limitations in this regard. Our own expectation is that United Nations assessed contributions will need to be a part of any long-term solution, and we are ready to explore proposals for joint financing of AU operations by the United Nations and AU members. We have no illusions regarding the sensitive and complex issues this raises, but we believe that ongoing reliance on ad hoc models for financing AU peace operations continues to hamper their effectiveness and that this is not sustainable in the long term.

In closing, cooperation between the United Nations and AU on peace and security matters has improved significantly, but it remains a work in progress. It is in all our interests that we take further steps to unlock the potential that more effective cooperation holds for both organizations.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Egyptian delegation for initiating today's very important meeting. Russia firmly supports the expansion and deepening of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations.

We welcome the progressive development of the partnership between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, as affirmed by the detailed discussions held between the members of both Councils here in New York yesterday on a wide range of issues related to the African continent. At the basis of such partnerships is the recognition of the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and the complementarity of the efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations, leveraging the comparative advantages of each.

It is clear that regional and subregional organizations in Africa know the situation there better than anyone else and have conflict prevention and settlement mechanisms that are better adjusted to local situations. We therefore support the principle of African solutions for African problems. We welcome the progress made in the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture, whose central roles are assigned to the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System and the African Standby Force.

Despite the efforts of Africans and international partners, Africa unfortunately remains vulnerable to all sorts of crises. We have recently seen an increase on the continent in the potential for conflict and new serious challenges to peace and security, while the number of displaced persons has reached a historic high. In such conditions, it is increasingly urgent to ensure constructive engagement between the United Nations and the African Union to prevent and resolve conflicts. In this context, we welcome the sharing of efforts between the two organizations to stabilize the situations in Darfur, Somalia, Mali and the Sahel as a whole, Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, and on the Sudanese track.

Promising cross-cutting areas for partnership include the fight against international terrorism, transnational organized crime, piracy, and the illicit traffic in arms and drugs. The potential crisis response of the AU is very useful and in need of international support. In our view, the priority must now be given to strengthening the African Standby Force. We must also coordinate the efforts of international partners in helping to build the African Union's peacekeeping capacity, taking into account the positive experience gained, inter alia, from the activities of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Somalia.

We believe that Chapter VIII of the Charter provides a sound legal basis for the African Union peacekeeping operations mandated by the Security Council and for assistance in the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture. We also believe it important to be able to rely on a predictable, reliable and flexible financing, including through the African Peace Fund. At the same time, we consider it necessary to ensure feedback, particularly in terms of the adequate periodic accountability of the African partners to the Security Council concerning the peacekeeping operations authorized by the Council.

In principle, we believe that it is also important for the General Assembly to conduct a thorough analysis of the issue of providing additional logistical and financial assistance to African Union peacekeeping operations through the assessed contributions of Member States.

We firmly believe that the further strengthening of the United Nations and the African Union partnership will effectively allow us to prevent and settle conflicts in Africa and can significantly enhance the global anti-crisis potential.

Russia actively participates in the provision of comprehensive assistance to African continent in the framework of existing international instruments, and on a bilateral basis. Our country also makes contributions to international programmes, including through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and the International Civil Defence Organization. At more than $20 billion, we are a leader in writing off debts of States in the region. The remaining debt obligations are channelled towards helping the countries of the continent through the debt-for-development scheme. In that way, my country is tangibly contributing to international efforts aimed at removing the economic reasons for conflict in Africa.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous, Special Envoy Menkerios, Ambassador Kamau and Ambassador António for their briefings today, and I offer a special thanks to Egypt for convening this meeting.

I would like to address four key features of the African Union (AU)-United Nations partnership today — mutual respect, financing, capacity-building and prevention.

I turn first to mutual respect. Given that more than 80 per cent of United Nations troops are deployed in Africa, we have a great deal to gain from enhanced communication between the AU and the United Nations. Given that African peacekeepers contribute more than half of the United Nations troops involved in peacekeeping on the African continent, it is both pragmatic and right to seek out African views on mandate formation, political mediation efforts and all the tools we deploy as the Security Council in the service of conflict resolution and conflict prevention. I would note, however, that it would be simplistic to suggest that the African view on any issue is a monolithic one any more than the views inside the Security Council are monolithic. But more communication and more listening to one another, more mutual respect and more supplementing of formal meetings with more informal conversations and brainstorming will make us each and together more effective.

Secondly, financing is a hot topic in the Council today. When it comes to discussing how to strengthen the United Nations-AU partnership, there is understandably a great deal of focus on how we can better support the deployment of African-led peace support operations to address urgent threats to peace and security. We know that the United Nations will not always be able or be best positioned to respond to a crisis. While the Security Council continues to be responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, we also know that the AU can be a particularly effective partner in that pursuit, including when it comes to conducting offensive military operations in complex security situations where there is no peace to keep and armed groups threaten the civilian population. There is a clear need to improve the financial and operational arrangements that undergird AU-fielded, United Nations-authorized peacekeeping missions and that will reflect our shared ownership and responsibilities.

We think there can be progress on this long stalled issue. We hope that AU member States will fulfil their commitment to finance 25 per cent of AU peace operations while also developing a fiduciary framework to govern the use of those funds and establishing new approaches to mandating and overseeing those missions with the Security Council to ensure that they are effective and accountable. The proposals being developed by AU High Representative Kaberuka could be important steps in that direction. If we are able to make progress, we will need to agree on common approaches to mission mandating and planning processes and on transparency and accountability mechanisms. Those will enable the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) together to monitor and promote strict adherence to international peacekeeping standards, which should include, of course, full respect for human rights norms and a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. By demonstrating that peacekeepers who commit abuses will be held to account, we strengthen the legitimacy of peacekeeping where it counts most, that is, with the civilians that peacekeepers are sworn to protect.

Thirdly, on capacity-building, improving the operational capacity of the relationship will also require ongoing efforts to build the capabilities of the AU, as envisaged in the African Peace and Security Architecture road map. Greater AU capabilities will translate into the AU delivering more effective peacekeeping missions. The United States has shown its commitment to that effort. We have strengthened AU command and control capabilities, supported multinational exercises for brigades and trained more than 250,000 peacekeepers since 2005. Two years ago, President Obama also established the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, a major new initiative to build the capacity of key African troop-contributing countries so that they can deploy more rapidly to peacekeeping missions. That was something that they had requested of the international community many times.

Fourthly, and finally, prevention is the issue on which all of us can agree in the abstract. Who can be against prevention? But where the differences often emerge inside each of our respective Councils is when concrete cases — real countries and real circumstances — emerge. Members of both the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council must get better at dealing with the political drivers of conflict. That can be more politically sensitive for neighbours than it is for countries that are far removed, and we should not dance around that fact. All of us must recognize that it is highly destabilizing when political opponents are attacked, people's rights are violated, elections are highjacked and when Constitutions are ignored. We have seen those kinds of actions helping fuel conflict that then ends up on both of our respective agendas. Conversely, those States that prioritize investments in accountable and inclusive institutions that deepen the rule of law, that include women in decision-making processes and that otherwise pursue improved governance and more open societies are empirically far less likely to descend into conflict and to eventually threaten regional peace and security. Our partnership must advance those goals, and Member States must be quick and unified in their response when the roots of conflict begin to grow.

The situation in Burundi remains deeply perilous, with more than 400 dead and 250,000 refugees to date, the near collapse of the Burundian economy, rampant insecurity and the constant threat of a real spiralling into violence. The Security Council has often lagged behind the PSC in responding to the crisis.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, five days ago the Government issued an arrest warrant for opposition leader Moïse Katumbi, soon after he announced he would run for President in elections scheduled for later this year. The Government has said that the elections will likely be postponed and that President Kabila Kabange, who is prohibited by the Constitution from running for a third term, will remain in office until they can be held. Civil society activists have been arrested or detained for protesting peacefully. Opposition leaders are planning nationwide protests for Thursday. Congolese security forces have in the past used repressive tactics, including deadly force, to prevent Congolese citizens from exercising their right to peaceful demonstration. This is a conflict-prevention moment. We know it. We see it. We know from history. We know from the present. It is imperative that we show a united front in calling on President Kabila Kabange to abide by the Constitution and step down when his term ends.

Marshalling a unified political front is equally important if conflict does break out. It is the sole way to maintain collective positions and to support meaningful actions. In South Sudan, the United Nations and the AU have supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) efforts to pressure both sides. Without those pressure points, without that leverage, it is hard to imagine the formation of the transitional Government that has occurred. The situation is extremely fragile, and sustaining momentum in the weeks and months ahead will require high-level attention and a continued, unified IGAD, AU, United Nations front.

By contrast, sadly, in the Sudan, the members of the Security Council and the PSC have been embarrassingly divided. We have failed even to successfully pressure the Government of the Sudan into permitting the delivery of supplies required by the soldiers and police who make up the beleaguered mission. Hundreds of containers of African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and contingent-owned equipment are languishing in Port Sudan and Darfur regional airports, while attacks against the mission by militia and other armed groups continue. Rather than hosting indicted Sudanese leaders, United Nations and AU member States should be exerting all the influence possible to persuade Khartoum to change course. Even if we could make progress on ensuring more predictable funding for AU missions — something that I think we all agree is a priority issue — it will mean little if we cannot unite behind the delivery of food to peacekeepers who are risking their lives on the front lines. If we are to forge a more robust United Nations-AU relationship, we should seek more progress on those concrete cases that affect millions of civilian lives in the here and now.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I very much thank all of today's briefers.

Much more than a decade ago, the African Union began making significant efforts to confront all of the challenges on the African continent, and those efforts have meant that the African Union has become a very crucial partner of the Security Council. It is therefore in the interests of everyone to strengthen the capacities of the African Union so that we can successfully address all of those challenges. That is why the financial agreements are particularly important, owing to which we decided to fund 25 per cent of the costs of peace operations for 2020. Over the past year, we have also seen a series of proposals to strengthen collaboration between the two Councils, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Security Council of the United Nations. I would like to refer to three of them in particular.

First, there are the annual informal consultations, such as the one held yesterday. I believe that yesterday's consultations were exceptionally productive, and I commend you, Sir, for them. I believe that we must continue on the same path during future meetings, focusing, however, on one or two issues so that all the members of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union can have a deeper exchange of ideas.

Secondly, it has been said on more than one occasion here that there needs to be greater channels of communication between the presidency of the Security Council and the African Union. I have to acknowledge that when I presided the Security Council in December 2015 I was not in contact with the Chair of African Union Commission, and I was not aware of it. However, I want to assure everyone that, during Spain's forthcoming presidency of the Council in December, I think i will exchange ideas with the presidency of the African Union, especially when we consider issues involving Africa on the Security Council.

Thirdly, the other idea that has already been brought up rather frequently involves the possibility of carrying out joint visits by both Councils. I believe that we missed a good opportunity on that score when the Council travelled to Guinea-Bissau, because only shortly thereafter the Peace and Security Council of the African Union also made a visit. It is unfortunate not to benefit from the two Councils' synergy in carrying out visits, in particular on the African continent.

We all know that three very important reviews were carried out in 2015 and this year, and I will not cite them all. But I would like to make several comments with regard to them, particularly in the context of the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000). I would like first to acknowledge the excellent work of the African Union in reviewing the resolution by citing four fundamental facts. First, one third of the countries that have a national action plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000) are members of the African Union. Secondly, the African Union has established a gender, peace and security programme for the years 2015 to 2020. Thirdly, the African Union has established the position of Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, which is held by Ms. Bineta Diop, who is carrying out excellent work. Lastly, the African Union has developed initiatives that the United Nations could also follow, such as the compilation of a roster of women mediators that would be of benefit to both the African Union and the United Nations. Accordingly, I would like to propose three concrete initiatives that would allow for improving our cooperation within the framework of resolution 1325 (2000).

First, I believe that we could explore how the African Union could participate in the meetings of the new informal group of the Security Council on women and peace and security when there are African countries on the agenda. Secondly, the secretariats of each organization should exchange information on how the United Nations and African Union peace operations could holistically address issues involving gender in their activities on the ground. Thirdly, we need to include women and peace and security issues on the meeting agendas of both organizations.

I want to conclude by mentioning two areas for potential cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union, namely, climate change and non-proliferation.

With regard to climate change, I want to underscore that the African Union has recongnized that climate change is a multiplier of threats to security in Africa. In that regard, I would like to recall the joint initiative of Spain and Egypt through which the Council would analyze the impact of new factors on security in the Sahel region.

As to the matter of non-proliferation, as members are aware, Spain chairs the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and has launched an important review of that resolution. I would like once more to call attention to the important partnership that we have with our African counterparts in order to redouble our efforts and avoid the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their diversion to to non-State actors.

I would like to conclude by aligning myself with the statement that will be delivered shortly on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Egypt, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for having convened this important open debate to discuss cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the areas of peace and security, especially as it refers to the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the framework of the implementation of the provisions set out in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, on regional arrangements.

Similarly, we appreciate the briefings made by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, Mr. Haile Menkerios; Ambassador Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Macharia Kamau.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela highly values the role of regional entities in the peaceful settlement and mediation of conflicts, given the successful experience of Latin America and the Caribbean through bodies such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Union of South American Nations. Our country also values the close relationship it has with African countries, as evidenced by the conclusion of the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of South America and Africa held on Margarita Island in 2009.

The efforts of the United Nations in Africa should take place in a context that takes into account the root causes of many of the conflicts that are currently affecting that region, which date back to the colonialism that affected the continent until the middle of the twentieth century and which have led to territorial, ethnic and religious divisions motivated by imperialist interests. Despite those obstacles, the peoples and the countries of Africa managed to achieve independence following years of bloody wars of liberation, exemplified by men such as Gamel Abdel Nasser, Ahmed Ben Bella, Patrice Lumumba and Nelson Mandela, who played decisive roles in those movements aimed at achieving independence, justice, democracy and human rights.

Despite the trauma of colonialism, Africa has built its own institutions and established its own structures in the framework of the African Union, the best setting in which to confront challenges in the areas of peace, security and development facing the African continent. The legitimacy of the African Union has allowed it to become a point of reference in the resolution of its own problems and challenges.

Given that the agenda of the Security Council largely remains focused on addressing issues that threaten peace and security on the African continent, it is even more necessary to consolidate and strengthen the strategic partnership between the two multilateral forums at the operational, political and tactical levels, and on the basis of mutual respect. In that regard, my country recognizes the fundamental mediation role that the African Union has been playing in the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa within the framework of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2016-2020 road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture. Likewise, we highlight the initiative entitled "Silencing the Guns: Prerequisites for Realizing a Conflict-Free Africa by the Year 2020".

It is crucial that the Security Council allow the African Union to play a more active role when it comes time to take action on issues concerning that region. Unfortunately, we have noted with concern the Council's tendency to apply measures under in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations — instead of giving priority to Chapters VI and VIII, which confer a significant role to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to regional arrangements — neglecting the need to include the African Union in those processes.

Constant interference in the internal affairs of African countries remains a critical factor of destabilization and conflict on the continent. Unfortunately, the national interests of some members of the Council in relation to the countries and conflicts in Africa has turned this organ into an element of interference and pressure, as evidenced by the fact that about 70 per cent of Council sanctions regimes are applied to African countries.

Another example of that situation was the hasty application of coercive measures under the prerogatives of Chapter VII of the Charter in Libya in 2011. African Union mediation efforts already in progress were dismissed by the decision of the Council. Five years later, we continue to suffer the serious consequences of that unfortunate decision and the actions of the international community in Libya — foreign intervention — led to the institutional collapse of the Libyan State, the destabilization of North Africa and, among other things, contributed to the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the subregion, phenomena that fuel many of today's conflicts and result in bloodshed for African peoples.

Similarly, it is paradoxical that, despite the African Union's position as a vital United Nations partner in matters of peace and security, the assessments and observations of our African brothers on certain issues, including on the question of Western Sahara and the migrant crisis, are not taken into account. It is worth recalling that Venezuela abstained in the voting on resolution 2240 (2015), concerning the migrant crisis, adopted by the Security Council. We believe that the resolution did not address the concerns of African countries, which were the ones most affected by the migrant crisis. The Observer for the African Union was not even allowed to participate in the debate, and Chapter VII of the Charter was cited to address a problem that is multidimensional and from which the African people continue to suffer.

Western Sahara provides another example of the lack of inclusion and the policy of double standards used by the Security Council on all African issues. The Council has been unable to react to the operational weakening of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, and to the refusal of some members to allow the representative of the African Union for Western Sahara to address the Security Council. In that regard, it should be recalled that resolution 690 (1991) gives the African Union an important role in support of the United Nations as a facilitator of the organization and supervision of a referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, the last existing colony in Africa.

As such, the relationship between the Security Council and the United Nations and the African Union Peace and Security Council must improve and be strengthened. That was one of the main elements considered in the context of the comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations in 2015. We believe it necessary to continue making progress in the consolidation and strengthening of those operations and in the development of common and integrated strategies to address emerging challenges in Africa, based on mutual responsibilities and comparative advantages between them, with a view to achieving better coordination and synergy between the two bodies. Hence, we hope for the timely conclusion of a joint United Nations-African Union framework for an enhanced partnership on peace and security, the platform of which will guide the commitment of both organizations before, during and after conflicts.

Moreover, we would like to highlight that during our presidency of the Council in February we held an open debate on peacebuilding (see S/Pv.7621), the result of which was a confirmation of the synergies that should exist between the two institutions in order to promote peace and the development of countries emerging from conflict and to prevent them from lapsing back into such situations.

For Venezuela it is vital to prioritize the role that can be played by regional and subregional organizations in the peaceful and political resolution of conflicts and in preventing them, and in the formulation of coordinated maintenance and consolidation strategies for peacekeeping and peacebuilding, since it is clear to us that the Security Council on its own is not sufficient to meet the peace and security challenges of the African continent, and that the African Union has a recognized authority and political legitimacy in the region. Hence, the relationship between our distinct bodies should be one of complementarity.

That is why Venezuela considers it imperative to continue to strengthen the cooperation and strategic partnership between the two bodies. That is the course of action that would be most beneficial in addressing shared challenges, such as addressing the structural causes of conflicts that threaten peace and security on the African continent, including poverty, foreign interference, the exclusion of their people, as well as addressing the great challenges facing the continent, such as the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and the migrant crisis, transnational organized crime, particularly in the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa, and the resolution of latent conflicts, such as the conflict of Western Sahara.

In conclusion, this open debate provides an opportune moment to recall the legacy of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who, in 2004, pointed out that at the time there was greater fatigue concerning problems on the African content than there were 5 or 10 years before then. The former Secretary-General also asserted that the situation had been much worse. Today, more than 12 years later, his remarks remain fully valid. We therefore encourage the international community to support in a decisive and continuous manner the efforts to promote peace, stability and economic and social development of Africa.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Egypt's initiative to convene today's open debate. With Africa Day just ahead of us on 25 May, it is of great significance to discuss United Nations-African Union (AU) cooperation in peace and security.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous; Ambassador Kamau, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; Ambassador Menkerios, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union; and Ambassador António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, for their briefings.

Ever since 2006, when the United Nations and the AU started the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU, United Nations-AU peace and security cooperation has been strengthened and produced good results. The United Nations has deployed with the Hybrid Operation in Darfur, provided logistical support to the African Union Mission to Somalia, enhanced efforts for a political settlement to such hot-spot issues in Africa as those in South Sudan and Mali, and supported post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The strengthened United Nations-AU cooperation in peace and security has played a positive role in maintaining peace and stability on the African continent.

China would like to make four comments with regard to future cooperation between the United Nations and the AU in peace and security.

First, they must always adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations is the core of the international collective security mechanism, and the Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. China supports further cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter advocates equal sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Such ideas have played an important guiding role in the cooperation between the United Nations and the AU. The United Nations should further support the AU in seeking the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue, consultations, good offices and mediation on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all the countries.

Secondly, they must always adhere to the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. To find solutions to hot-spot issues in Africa, it is important to consider the historical background and current realities, and to take comprehensive measures to achieve and promote security through cooperation. China welcomes the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016 to 2020, which prioritizes conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction. China hopes that the United Nations will strengthen cooperation with the AU and support the AU in implementing the Peace and Security Architecture road map in order to achieve win-win cooperation and common security.

Thirdly, they must enhance mutual coordination and coherence and respect the ownership of the African countries. When it comes to seeking solutions to the hot-spot issues in Africa, the AU has rich experience and enjoys unique geographical, historical and cultural advantages. It can play an irreplaceable role. China welcomes the work of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security in recent years and the annual joint consultative meetings between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. Such mechanisms can bring into full play the comparative advantages of each organization so that they can complement each other and promote each other's work thereby forming synergies.

China welcomes the AU's adoption of the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027 at its Johannesburg Forum in 2015, which can further promote the partnership between the AU and the United Nations. China hopes that both parties will fully utilize the relevant mechanism, strengthen coordination in seeking a political settlement to hot-spot issues in Africa, and support the settlement of African issues by Africans in the African way. Meanwhile, it is important to draw on lessons learned and experience in a timely manner and to further explore flexible, pragmatic, positive and effective ways of cooperating.

Fourthly, we must prioritize support for the AU in enhancing its collective security mechanism. In the field of peace and security, the AU faces difficulties in the area of human and financial resources. It therefore needs the continued support and assistance of the international community. We welcome the AU appointment of Mr. Kaberuka as High Representative for the African Peace Fund. We hope that the United Nations will provide more support to the AU collective security mechanism, in particular in training, institution-building and logistical and financial support. We also hope that the United Nations will further support the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis in addressing regional terrorism and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea so as to effectively increase the continent's overall collective security capacity.

China attaches great importance to enhancing peace and security cooperation between China and Africa. To date, China has participated in 16 United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. At present, over 2,600 Chinese peacekeepers are deployed in seven United Nations missions, including in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Darfur and Liberia. China has also dispatched naval convoys to Somali waters in the Gulf of Aden to assist the countries of the region address piracy.

In December, at the Johannesburg Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping of China proposed 10 cooperation programmes, one of which involved enhancing cooperation between China and Africa in peace and security. President Xi Jinping has declared that China will continue to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, provide the AU with $60 million in assistance, support the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis, and help African countries build their capacities in such areas as national defence, counter-terrorism, the prevention of explosions, and customs and immigation control. China is ready to work with all African countries to actively implement the outcome of the Johannesburg Forum and to support the AU in implementing its Agenda 2063. We are ready to work with the international community in further promoting United Nations-AU cooperation, maintain peace and stability in Africa, build a new kind of international relations centred on win-win cooperation, and make joint efforts to build a future that is more secure and better.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal thanks the Egyptian presidency for having taken the initiative to organize this important debate on the theme "United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture". We also commend you, Sir, on the concept note (S/2016/428, annex) that you have provided to guide our work. We also thank you briefers, who insightful statements have helped to illuminate our debate.

This debate is timely and offers us a decisive opportunity to deepen our reflection on the implementation of the recommendations of the reviews of the United Nations peace operations. One of the most consensual of those recommendations is to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, given its special status as a strategic partner of the United Nations.

In that regard, I am pleased to welcome the positive development in the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union over the course of the past decade, in particular the operationalization of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security. In addition, since 2010, the United Nations has had a liaison office at the African Union, while the finalization of a joint framework for an enhanced partnership on peace and security has been announced for the end of this year.

The Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, which are currently holding the tenth session of their annual joint consultations, have in practice demonstrated a pragmatic approach by working together in the area of peacekeeping operations, whether it be in Somalia, Darfur, Guinea-Bissau, Central Africa, Mali or in the early stages in Burundi. Those are just some examples among many that demonstrate the vitality of the partnership. However, we also need to point out that the potential of this cooperation has not been sufficiently explored, mainly because of several obstacles that need to be overcome in order to enable the African Union to carry out its noble function of tackling the challenges to peace and security on the continent.

The disturbing trend of conflicts we are witnessing with the emergence of new cross-cutting and asymmetrical threats bring into question the very foundations of our collective security system. They are objective reasons to start thinking strategically about strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on matters of peace and security. Of course, it is up to the Security Council, first and foremost, given its primary responsibility in maintaining international peace and security, to respond to crises, but it is clear that it cannot handle that heavy task alone.

It is therefore necessary, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations and to encourage the development of regional responses to crises. Regional organizations have the advantage of being closer to the ground and they know the local realities and the dynamics of conflict better and can help identify the most appropriate intervention policies. In that regard, as a strategic partner of the United Nations in the area of peace and security, the African Union has the skills and legal framework required to provide a first response to crises. It also has demonstrated its ability to conduct operations in support of peace, particularly in Mali and Somalia, to name just those two few examples.

The African Union remains a major player in collective security that is trying to refine its structures and consolidate in its area of responsibility. In furtherance of that aim, the African Union has already put inplace a Peace and Security Architecture that provides a comprehensive framework aimed at preventing, containing and managing conflicts across the continent. The development and implementation of the Architecture is, without a doubt, an illustration of the unwavering commitment of the African Union to tackle head-on issues linked to peace and security on the continent. In the same vein, the African Standby Force showed its full operational capacity following the smooth conduct of the Amani Africa II exercise, which was carried out in November 2015. We must also note the adoption of the 2016-2020 road map, which aims, among other things, to prevent and remove obstacles to fully operationalizing the African Union Peace and Security Architecture.

While evidence shows that the Peace and Security Council and the mechanisms of the African Peace and Security Architecture have been active in various crises since 2004, including Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Comoros, Darfur and Somalia, their efforts were often limited by various factors, including the nagging problem of financing.

On the occasion of the tenth session of annual consultations between the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Security Council, and as we prepare to celebrate the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, which is today the African Union, as well as given the major challenge posed by the funding of the Peace and Security Architecture, with its growing demand for resources, in addition to logistical and operational constraints, both bodies need to find a new funding mechanism that is sustainable and predictable in order to meet the challenges of peace and security in Africa and ensure that the peace and security architecture in Africa is operational.

In that connection, Senegal strongly supports the recommendations contained in the report (see S/2015/446) of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations relating to building the capacity of the African Union in the areas of prevention and peacekeeping. We look forward with great interest to the implementation of the measures and initiatives announced by Secretary-General in his report on the future of peace operations (S/2015/682). We believe that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/8) that we have we just adopted is a very good document for strengthening the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations, but we must also broaden our perspectives with regard to the relationship between the African Union and the United Nations by developing other synergies, in particular between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Senegal believes that we cannot have sustainable peace without inclusive and sustainable development.

The President (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Egypt.

The drafters of the Charter of the United Nations revealed their forward-looking vision when they included Chapter VIII, which provides the necessary basis for the establishment of a partnership between the United Nations, as the primary entity responsible for maintaining international peace and security, and regional and subregional organizations, which play a crucial role in preventing, managing and settling conflicts.

The African Union is proof of the comparative advantages of regional organizations, including their ability to have an in-depth understanding of a conflict's context and root causes. They are therefore capable of playing vital roles in mediation and sponsoring the political operations aimed at the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

In addition, regional organizations are always ready to deploy peacekeeping operations in the early stages. The role played by the African Union and other African subregional organizations in Somalia, Mali, the Central African Republic and other countries is the best proof that the continent is ready to assume the heavy burden of bringing peace and security to African countries. They are also upholding the principle of African solutions to African problems.

Over the past decade, in cooperation with different partners, at the forefront of which is the United Nations, the African Union has gone a long way towards building the components of the African Peace and Security Architecture, both at regional and subregional levels. It has also built the necessary capacities to operationalize it. This is a full-fledged Architecture, which includes prevention mechanisms, mediation, the management and settlement of crises, as well as reconstruction and development for peacebuilding and preventing post-conflict countries from relapsing into violence. It is in line with the African Union's endeavours to ensure a continent free from conflicts and in which everyone enjoys peace and stability, which is also one of the main objectives of the ambitious Vision Africa 2063.

The AU has developed a road map for 2016-2020 that aims at enhancing coordination among all components of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the regional and subregional mechanisms. The road map is designed to ensure their effective engagement at the earliest signs of conflict, from the management and settlement of conflicts and all the way to the peacebuilding and reconstruction phases.

In line with those important developments at the level of Africa and in the broader context of the United Nations, the three reviews — on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, peacekeeping operations and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security — came to encompass all the changes in the nature and scope of conflicts and international crises. The reviews have opened a new chapter that will help to formulate a comprehensive vision based on the concept of sustaining peace, which in turn is based on the interaction among the different security, political and development forces brought to bear on putting an end to military conflicts, coming up with effective solutions and addressing the root causes of conflict.

Egypt believes that the reviews and the important resulting recommendations present new and welcome prospects for partnership between the United Nations and the AU through a paradigm shift in the way we deal with the challenges of peace and security. We are moving from the current trend based on the management of conflicts after they erupt, along with the subsequent high humanitarian costs, destruction of State infrastructure and the tearing of the fabric of society, to a model that addresses conflicts in a more comprehensive way, including through preventive diplomacy mechanisms, by giving priority to political solutions that seek to prevent, manage and settle conflicts and by upholding the principle of national ownership and leadership as the fundamental safeguard for successful efforts aimed at building sustained peace.

In that context, Egypt affirms the importance of the continuing United Nations support for capacity-building in the African Union and in regional and subregional organizations following the conclusion of the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU in 2016 through the New Partnership for the Development of Africa and the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027. It is also crucial that the United Nations provide the necessary flexible, sustainable and predictable financing for all activities related to peace and security for the AU, in particular those mandated by the Security Council, taking into consideration the primary responsibility of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, Egypt stresses that we have to formulate more in-depth and inclusive partnerships at both the regional and international levels. That is the ideal way to confront the contemporary forms that security challenges are taking in today's world, since such challenges are highly complex, multidimensional and plagued with intertwined root causes.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I would appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable speed so that interpretation may be provided accurately. I wish to inform all concerned that, given the lengthy list of speakers, we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Annika Söder, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. Söder (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

I would also like to thank the President for convening this important open debate, and the briefers for their contributions this morning.

I would like to say that, over the years, the United Nations has shown that it is uniquely placed to support efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace. But we acknowledge that, to maintain that role in an ever-changing environment, the United Nations cannot do it alone. Efforts to meet challenges to peace and security in Africa will not be successful without the context-specific knowledge, understanding and ability that rest with regional and subregional organizations. I am of course speaking here both of the African Union (AU) and of the regional economic communities.

In a book published by Uppsala University that I just read, the author asks whether regional organizations are challengers or partners to the United Nations. My response would be, "both, and both in a good way". While much progress has been made to enhance the United Nations-African Union partnership over the years, it is now essential that we move forward towards the implementation of the measures needed to make the partnership become sustainable and deliver concrete results. Open debates are important, but there is also a need to ensure that the Security Council systematically integrates the knowledge that we have accumulated into its daily work and that the regions are proactively consulted.

I would like to take this opportunity to also pay tribute to the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, the late Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Some of us remember that, already in 1992, his milestone report *An Agenda for Peace*, stated that regional action, paired with the efforts of the Security Council, could contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs. We consider those words to remain truly valid today, and we, the Nordic countries, strongly believe that a new United Nations commitment for peace also needs to include a solid commitment to assisting African regional and subregional organizations. I would briefly like to highlight three areas that I believe are essential features of an enhanced partnership between the United Nations and the AU.

First, it almost goes without saying, but the partnership should be mutually reinforcing.

Secondly, the partnership should not only focus on the narrow peacekeeping aspects, but encompass conflict prevention and inclusive peacebuilding — in keeping with the recent resolutions on the United Nations peacebuilding, which signal a much-needed change in our mindset by establishing a new concept of sustaining peace. We must not forget economic and social factors in that respect.

Thirdly, the partnership should address the need for predictable and sustainable funding arrangements for regional peace operations. The Nordic countries are deeply committed to ensuring thiat. In particular, we commend the efforts of Donald Kaberuka, High Representative of the AU Peace Fund.

A few weeks ago Sweden, together with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the AU Commission, organized a high-level forum in New York on the theme "The Africa we want in 2030, 2063 and beyond". The forum confirmed that the continued and intensified promotion of peace and security was essential for creating a favourable environment for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

As we now work to adapt and revitalize United Nations structures to conform to the realities of today, it is of key importance that the linkages between the African Peace and Security Architecture and all the relevant parts of the United Nations, including the peacebuilding entities, be reinforced, and that this constitutes a cornerstone of a strengthened United Nations-African Union partnership.

Let me mention the Nordic countries' continued support for the AU's peace efforts. As part of that, our Nordic Defense Cooperation is already providing support to the Eastern Africa Standby Force through training events in national centres and programmes for the contributing countries.

Let me compliment the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia. I would mention women's role in peace in Liberia and, perhaps less known, in Uganda recently. I also note Namibia's role in launching resolution 1325 (2000) as far back as 2000, and I commend the ongoing efforts of the East African Community, the Economic Community of West African States and, not least, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which has many issues on its agenda.

A stronger United Nations-AU partnership will greatly contribute to reducing fragility and to fostering political stability and effective governance, not only in Africa but also in dealing with common challenges such as piracy, terrorism and climate change. The Nordic countries, out of the conviction that regional ownership is a precondition for legitimacy, effectiveness and success, will continue to support all those efforts. It is time for progress and partnership. And it is time to push for peace together.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor the representative of India.

Mr. Lal (India): We thank you, Mr. President, for conducting this timely debate. The discussion has been useful. In the interest of brevity, I will highlight some parts of our statement, the complete version of which will be available for circulation.

Maintaining peace and security across the world continues to be a massive challenge. The nature of conflict itself is changing. While the United Nations continues to be heavily invested in peace and security efforts, it is difficult for it to succeed on its own.

While the United Nations has engaged in peacekeeping efforts in Africa since the 1960s, in the past couple of decades the African Union (AU) and some regional groups — such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community — have also undertaken such efforts in several conflicts in Africa. At the same time, cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council has become institutionalized. The United Nations-AU collaboration on peace and security has been successful in many ways in the context of United Nations collaboration with regional arrangements under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

AU peacekeeping efforts have formed the precursor to, and the basis for, several United Nations peacekeeping efforts, for instance in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Central African Republic and Somalia.

Regional organizations can have several advantages in dealing with crises in their respective regions. If capable, they may become quick responders; they may have a better understanding of the complexities of the region; they may enjoy advantages of language and intelligence, et cetera. They can also act as buffers until the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers. Many regional organizations, however, may also face serious constraints of capacity, resources and conflicting geopolitical interests. Priorities of the Security Council and those of the regional organization could also differ significantly on some occasions.

While the largest United Nations peacekeeping deployments have been in Africa, their record of success has been mixed, which is partly a reflection of the complexities of geopolitics, political will and the capacities and resources backing the peacekeeping efforts. Important lessons can be drawn from analysing the various missions.

The international community has recognized the cross-cutting and interlinked nature of the factors essential for peace with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and with the AU Agenda 2063. The importance of sustainable development, economic growth and greater funding has also been recognized in the twin resolutions adopted last month — General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — on the peacebuilding architecture and sustainable peace.

India has always engaged actively on peace and security issues, including in the Security Council. India has been a member of the Peacebuilding Commission since its inception, 10 years ago. India has also made significant financial contributions to the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Government of India has seconded an officer to the United Nations office in the AU. Indian peacekeepers have served in 22 missions in Africa since the 1960s. Currently, Indian peacekeepers are serving in eight United Nations peacekeeping missions on the African continent. The first-ever female formed police unit, provided by India and deployed in Liberia, was highly successful. India has also made a financial contribution to the operations of the African Union Mission in Somalia. The Indian navy contributed to the international efforts to fight the menace of piracy off the coast of Somalia. India has also contributed to the training and capacity-building of peacekeepers from Africa.

India has long-standing, close links with Africa, not only through its diaspora and trade and investment relations but also by partnering with Africa, first during the decolonization and anti-apartheid phases and then for development cooperation. The tradition of South-South solidarity was reinforced during the third India-Africa Forum Summit, held last October. At the Summit, Prime Minister Modi announced a significant enhancement of the scale of our development partnership, which helps strengthen the foundation for peaceful and prosperous nations. Prime Minister Modi also announced support for the African Union's peacekeeping efforts, including through the training of trainers in India and in Africa. India, along with the United States, will organize a United Nations peacekeeping course for our African partners in July and August of this year.

In addition to pursuing very substantive development partnerships with our friends in Africa, India stands ready to contribute to any future peacekeeping operations that may be required to maintain peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate. We also appreciate the insightful briefings we received this morning.

Regional organizations can be instrumental in addressing issues of international peace and security, in particular those pertaining to their own region. After all, the challenges and issues of a region are best understood by the people of that region. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations serves as an acknowledgement of that fact. In fact, Article 52 of the Charter encourages regional organizations to play their roles in the pacific settlement of disputes.At the same time, under Article 53 regional organizations rely upon authorization by the Security Council for enforcement actions, barring some exceptions. Therefore, in the area of international peace and security, the Charter of the United Nations envisages an interdependent relationship and close coordination between regional organizations and the United Nations.

The Security Council's visit to Africa last week and its informal consultations with the African Union Peace and Security Council yesterday manifest its continuing commitment to cooperation and collaboration with regional players on issues of peace and security in Africa.

United Nations-African Union (AU) peace and security cooperation has evolved over the years and seeks strengthened responses and reactions to challenges in the face of increasing conflicts in the African continent. With over 80 per cent of United Nations peacekeeping missions based in Africa, it is imperative that the United Nations and the AU maintain close cooperation for a deeper understanding of the nature of conflicts, which in turn can deliver effective responses. We believe that the complexity of the emerging threats to peace and security has increased the need for a better understanding of the nature of threats and a greater degree of responsiveness.

The AU forms a critical link between its subregions and the United Nations. That link can be utilized and reinforced through a strategic partnership between the two organizations.

We know that effective conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding require rapid and appropriate responses and effective strategies, with matching financial, human and logistical support. That puts greater demands on African peacekeeping missions. New African troop-contributing and police-contributing countries must therefore be assisted in strengthening their capacities and resources. Their voices and those of other troop-contributing countries must also be taken on board in developing mandates.

As one of the largest troop-contributing countries, Pakistan is ready to explore avenues of cooperation with the AU, to assist in capacity-building and to help individual African countries. Pakistan has a long-standing commitment to United Nations peacekeeping. Currently, we contribute over 7,000 personnel, the overwhelming majority of whom are deployed in Africa. We are proud of our role in some of the notable successes of peacekeeping in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

We have observed that non-permanent members of the Council from Africa use their presidency to highlight regional priorities in the Council. Last year, Nigeria organized a debate on the role of regional organizations (see S/PV.7505), while Egypt has gone a step further by focusing the debate on the African Union itself. That is what is called responsiveness and responsibility to the region and to the countries that have supported one's tenure in the Council through the election process. That is what we believe must be strengthened in the Council — democracy, representativeness and accountability. Pakistan therefore supports expanding the number of African seats on the Council on a basis of periodic elections and a fixed rotation. We believe that will boost United Nations-African Union cooperation on matters of international peace and security, particularly those concerning the African region itself.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): We commend the Egyptian presidency of the Council for initiating and convening today's open debate. As a Member Observer of the African Union (AU), Kazakhstan is deeply committed to strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture and welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security. My delegation will do everything in its power to support Africa in implementing the recommendations of the three related 2015 United Nations reviews — of peacekeeping operations, the peacebuilding architecture and resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

Kazakhstan believes that in Africa we have to expand the concept of peace and stability from security that is State-centred to security that is people-oriented, and from military security to non-military, in order to encompass a broad concept of human security that includes food, water and energy for all. Such a concept calls for greater cooperation with a wide range of organizations and regional groups in order to achieve the objectives of State-building, establishing the rule of law and good governance, protecting civilians, disarming combatants and reforming the security and justice sectors. They should be based on inclusive political processes, all of which shape our mandates and how we implement them.

Implementing resolution 2282 (2016) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture in Africa will require greater internal coherence among the United Nations and its agencies and country teams on the ground and with regional and subregional structures, as well as international financial institutions and regional banks. It implies closer collaboration between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, their special representatives and the special political missions and peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. We must take into account the need for a regular flow of funding to AU missions. Peacebuilding must involve conflict prevention and resolution from the very start rather than beginning in the post-conflict phase. The emphasis should be on building peace rather than enforcing security.

In support of Africa, Kazakhstan has signed a third-party cost-sharing agreement with the United Nations Development Programme with a view to implementing a partnership for sustainable development between Africa and Kazakhstan, aimed at benefiting 45 countries in the region by sharing institutional experiences and best practices. We consider it essential to address security issues and maintain lasting peace by developing a more comprehensive continental strategy that is put together by all stakeholders, including civil society. If we are to achieve the aspirations for Africa's Agenda 2063, we have to think in terms of stronger military, diplomatic and development partnerships that can capitalize on every kind of cooperation — North-South, South-South and triangular — so as to support the efforts of the United Nations, the Security Council and the AU through their various resolutions on peace and security.

No peace can be complete without the dimension of women and peace and security, and Kazakhstan will spare no effort to fully implement resolution 1325 (2000) and, most importantly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) in the region. In that regard, food, water and energy security are essential to peace and stability and, together with nuclear security, form the four pillars supporting Kazakhstan's bid for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council. At the Fourth Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., President Nazarbayev of

Kazakhstan drew the attention of world leaders to his very significant document "Manifesto. The World. The Twenty-first Century". He has proposed formulating a 2045 global strategic initiative plan, whose primary goal would be to eliminate the root causes of wars and conflicts by the time of the centenary of the United Nations, in 2045. During his address to the General Assembly in September (see A/70/PV.13), he also called for investing 1 per cent of Member States' defence budgets in the special United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

Addressing Africa's issues requires taking bold and daring measures under the auspices of the United Nations and the AU, together with the European Union. We therefore call on all delegations to support these forward-looking approaches, together with the other existing processes of the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement. We must invest more in sustainable development, and we will join the States of Africa and the international community in making Africa conflict-free.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Egypt's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to express our appreciation to you for holding today's open debate and for the briefings provided earlier this morning.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the enhanced relationship and cooperation of the United Nations with regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. NAM has always commended the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the East African Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for their indispensable roles and contributions to peace and security in various parts of Africa. We encourage making the political process a priority, while emphasizing the importance of focusing on development assistance in regions affected by war, since peace and development are mutually reinforcing.

NAM supports the continued efforts to strengthen African peacekeeping capabilities and emphasizes the importance of implementing the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union and the joint action plan for United Nations support to the African Union in peacekeeping in the short, medium and long term and in all relevant areas. NAM has also recommended enhancing the effective partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in order to improve the planning, deployment and management of African peacekeeping operations.

At this juncture, I would like to reiterate NAM's principled position on peacekeeping by stressing that the establishment of any peacekeeping operation, or the extension of the mandates of existing operations, should strictly comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the principles that have evolved to govern such operations and have become basic to them — that is, the consent of the parties, the non-use of force except in self-defence, and impartiality. NAM stresses that respect for the principles of the sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of every State, and of non-intervention in matters that fall essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States, should also be upheld in that regard.

The leaders of the African Union expressed their determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa through the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, which is now a key pillar of the AU's visionary Agenda 2063. The African Union has established its own thematic priorities and has developed two road maps to help the Peace and Security Architecture reach its stated objectives. Finally, NAM hopes that today's open debate can help to identify the partnership opportunities between the various pillars involved in the maintenance of international peace and security, and to generate new momentum for strengthening peace and security cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Plasai (Thailand): Let me first express my delegation's appreciation to the Egyptian presidency for convening today's open debate and to all the briefers for their respective remarks.

I wish to align myself with the statement just delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The world is now faced with peace and security challenges that are more diverse and complex than ever before. That is particularly true in the context of Africa. The three major peace and security reviews in 2015 called for deepened and strengthened partnership between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), as well as its regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, with a view to better utilizing the comparative advantage of regional actors in addressing such challenges. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations is a recognition that certain situations could be more appropriately dealt with by regional actions. At the same time, it also provides a basis for operationalizing the partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements. In that regard, we welcome the adoption today of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8.

We recognize the valuable contribution of the African Union to the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, in particular through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The new APSA road map 2016-2020 is an aspirational document aimed at taking a more holistic approach that gives primacy to conflict prevention, political solutions and sustaining peace. In our view, the experiences in the following areas of United Nations-AU partnership should feature prominently in the future direction of APSA:

The first is peace operations. From supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, there is a wealth of lessons and best practices that can be drawn from the United Nations-AU cooperation in peace operations.

The second is peacebuilding. Africa is at the heart of United Nations peacebuilding efforts. Last month, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted parallel resolutions (70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively) on the review of peacebuilding, emphasizing the role of the AU.

The third is women, peace and security. Taking forward the aspirations of resolution 1325 (2000), the African Union Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020) is designed to achieve the increased participation of African women in the peace process and to enhance the protection of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The fourth is counter-terrorism. The atrocities committed by Boko Haram are a stark reminder that Africa, too, is affected by terrorism. Responding to such threats requires the concerted effort of countries of the region. Earlier this month, the Council, in its presidential statement S/PRST/2016/7, commended such efforts in the fight against Boko Haram.

As part of our contribution to the debate, we would like to suggest the following as the possible way forward in advancing the United Nations-AU peace and security cooperation:

First, the United Nations undertook three major reviews of the peace and security architecture in 2015. That process continues this year with the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. One important consideration for the AU is whether reviews of or adjustments to the APSA mechanisms should be undertaken to align them with the outcome of the aforementioned United Nations review processes.

Secondly, the United Nations-AU partnership should be geared towards conflict prevention and laying a firm foundation for sustainable peace. This means addressing the root causes of conflicts, including socioeconomic disparities, social injustice and marginalization, as well as ensuring capacity-building and strengthening State institutions. Resources are required to realize these objectives. The AU should be supported with adequate and predictable funding, especially when acting under the authorization of the Security Council. At the same time, as we are mindful of the limited resources within the United Nations system, other avenues of funding partnerships — including intergovernmental assistance, international and regional financial institutions, and domestic resource mobilization — should also be explored. In this regard, we recognize the generous contributions made by several countries in support of peace and security in Africa.

Thirdly, in order to ensure coherence and complementarity among different United Nations agencies and partnership mechanisms on Africa, we see an important strategic and coordinating role for the United Nations Office to the African Union and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The two Offices should work closely with the AU Commission to generate renewed momentum for strengthening peace and security in Africa, in particular in developing a joint United Nations-AU framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security. We share the assessment contained in the concept note before us (S/2016/428, annex) that this joint United Nations-AU framework will transform the United Nations-AU collaboration into a more holistic partnership capable of comprehensively responding to the contemporary peace and security challenges in Africa.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate that African problems require African solutions, and that the United Nations can play a role in this regard. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations gives us a framework for the Organization to cooperate with regional arrangements. We should take this forward and turn such cooperation into a true partnership, especially in the context of Africa. Only by pooling together our resolve and resources can we realize the full potential of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I thank Egypt for organizing today's debate. It is extremely timely and relevant.

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union, and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Last week, we hosted in Rome the first-ever ministerial conference between Italy and Africa. With 36 ministers from African countries and 54 delegations, the conference aimed at renewing Italy's natural partnership with Africa. Being a natural bridge towards Africa, in Rome we proposed a sustainability compact between Italy and Africa and between Europe and Africa. The compact would address the following issues.

The sustainability of peace and security, first and foremost to avoid conflicts and relapse into conflicts and to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa; socioeconomic sustainability to seize the immense opportunities the continent provides; and sustainability in managing migration, building upon the migration compact that Italy has proposed to the European Union to promote a strategic approach. In doing so, Italy is moved by the idea that the solution to today's challenges — terrorism, climate change, sustainable development, migration — can be found in Africa and with the contribution of our African partners. Italy is committed to finding common solutions because we share the same concerns and fate as our African partners.

Faced with such challenges, the United Nations should act as an enabler for peace and work towards a more effective multilateralism as the only viable solution to today's borderless challenges. In this context, the role of the African Union (AU) and a strengthened cooperation with the United Nations under Chapter VIII of the Charter are pivotal, as advocated by the three review processes carried out last year in the field of peace and security. A common theme of the reviews is the need for the United Nations to build stronger partnerships with regional and subregional actors.

Such a partnership is pivotal because it ensures a more solid platform for the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture. First and foremost, it promotes greater ownership through the principle of subsidiarity, actively involving in finding solutions those organizations and countries that better understand the root causes of the problems. Secondly, it underscores the importance of conflict prevention, early warning and preventive diplomacy by promoting a paradigm shift from the current focus on conflict management towards a more holistic approach that gives primacy to political solutions. Thirdly, it underpins the concept of sustaining peace, encompassing all cycles of conflict, which is key to long-term, stable and durable peace in Africa, a continent still hosting the vast majority of United Nations peacekeepers and at the centre of United Nations peacebuilding efforts. Moreover, it promotes a fine tuning between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and the African Agenda 2063. Their implementation is essential to addressing the root causes of conflicts and to promoting an holistic approach to peace and security.

Of course, the partnership between the United Nations and the AU needs to be effective and smooth in order to address matters of common interest in a pragmatic and cooperative fashion. The joint United Nations-AU framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security can represent a blueprint for early and continuous engagement between the two organizations before, during and after conflicts, with a view to finding political solutions to crises. Among the ways to ensure an effective partnership, I wish to underscore the importance of securing predictable, sustainable and flexible resources for operations; promoting better coordination and interaction between tUnited Nations and AU envoys; involving more women and youth in conflict-prevention and peacebuilding initiatives; cooperating in electoral assistance, in particular this year, when Africa will hold more than 20 elections; addressing the root causes and socioeconomic causes of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa; and focusing on capacity-building and institution-building to sustain peace.

In terms of the sustainable funding for African Union operations, let me recall the findings of the Prodi report of 2008 (see S/2008/813), which proposed concrete recommendations to address the issue. In that respect, we welcome the recent appointment of the former President of the African Development Bank, Mr. Donald Kaberuka, as the African Union High Representative to the Peace Fund. It is an important sign of the AU commitment to tackle financial challenges.

We believe in a stronger United Nations-AU relationship, because Italy works with the African Union and appreciates the value it can add. Our approach is based on finding political solutions by involving African partners, rather than military interventions. Last week in Vienna, we sought to do so in the case of Libya, by also inviting the African countries on the southern border of that country.

Italy is committed to support the structures and initiatives of the African Union Commission, in particular its Peace and Security Department. We will continue to offer such support within the partnerships established by the African Union with the European Union and the United Nations and by relying on bilateral instruments, such as the Italian-African Peace Facility, which has been operational since 2007 and represents a clear example of sustainable and predictable funding. Through the Facility, Italy has supported the African Union Mission in Somalia, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for the Sudan, the African Union Panel of the Wise and the Tana High-level Forum on Security in Africa. We will contribute to the further operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and through new joint initiatives especially focused on the Horn of Africa. We reaffirm our willingness to continue to cooperate on African crisis scenarios and to promote effective cooperation among the AU, African subregional organizations and other international partners.

If elected, that is the approach that Italy will bring to the Security Council starting next year.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Menkveld (Netherlands): I align myself with the statement to be delivered later today by the observer of the European Union (EU).

I thank the Egyptian presidency for its excellent and detailed concept note (S/2016/428, annex) on this pivotal subject.

In this short statement, I would like to address the three main phases of the continuum of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and sustaining peace.

On conflict prevention, we need to get better. Let me highlight mediation in particular. We must learn from successes, but also from cases that did not bring about the desired results because responsibilities and strategies were not well enough coordinated and undermined mediation efforts. The United Nations and the African Union (AU) have strengthened their mediation systems. The AU regularly deploys special envoys and negotiators. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA), too, has become more effective, and its work is in high demand. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has increased its contribution to DPA by 25 per cent, which brings it to $1.25 million a year.

We finance the Clingendael Mediation Facility, which trains groups of senior AU African women mediators together with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, UN-Women and the AU. The women are also supported to develop a sustainable network, gain access to resources and increase their own expertise and skills set, thereby strengthening the position of women in peace processes.

On peacekeeping, the growing role played by the AU in crisis situations on the African continent is encouraging and inspiring, thanks to the African Peace and Security Architecture. When missions are rehatted, the process is arduous. More institutionalized and practical cooperation between the AU and the United Nations could improve that process. In the words of the Secretary-General, we need

> "to move away from improvisation in how we work together." (*S/2015/582, para. 30*)

On sustaining peace, the post-conflict phase requires an integrated approach with a coherent and cooperative attitude towards African initiatives from both the United Nations and the EU. An example of increased EU-United Nations-AU collaboration on security sector reform (SSR) serves to illustrate that. The three organizations jointly worked on strategies and experiences and plans to jointly boost SSR efforts in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Madagascar. We are proud to contribute and stand ready to support similar joint SSR-efforts in Mali and Somalia. Such efforts should keep in mind long-term reconstruction and development needs, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and the AU Agenda 2063 for African development.

In conclusion, a new form of cooperation between the AU and the United Nations must be worked out in every phase of the continuum. In that regard, a permanent African presence on the Security Council may not be without merit. We hope that the joint AU-United Nations framework for an enhanced partnership will succeed in institutionalizing the strategic partnership between both organizations, thereby creating the conditions for an equal partnership between the AU and the United Nations with a common understanding of threats to international peace and security. The presence of ambassadors from the AU Peace and Security Council in the Chamber today is a great step in that direction. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, a partner of the Council for peace, justice and development, is committed to supporting such cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): Regional and subregional organizations in Africa are increasingly contributing to complement the work of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security on the African continent, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Among the organizations on the continent, the African Union (AU) is the most representative, with 54 members, as well as one of the oldest. The AU is also one of the regional organizations with which the United Nations maintains the most diversified and frequent contacts and cooperation.

Since 2002, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has been developing a platform for the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts, as well as for post-conflict reconstruction and development. The APSA road map for the period 2016-2020, launched in April, provides a renewed strategic direction for the promotion of peace and security in Africa. Over the past 10 years, we have witnessed important institutional advances that have set the stage for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the AU.

The three recent reviews on peacekeeping operations, on the peacebuilding architecture and on women and peace and security provided us with a singular opportunity to discuss peace and security in Africa. In that regard, allow me to highlight the adoption, on 27 April, of the landmark General Assembly resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Those three reviews on peace and security emphasized prevention and the political solution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. In that regard, we underline that prevention must not only be carried out with full respect for international law and international humanitarian law, but must also give due consideration to the views of the leadership and the organizations of a given region.

Let me refer to two past cases in Africa, where if a prevention-oriented approach had been adopted, results could have been different: the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the military intervention in Libya in 2011. In Rwanda, early warnings were given on several occasions, including by the then Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, Roméo Dallaire, but those fell on deaf ears. The error was therefore one of omission. In the case of Libya, had the ad hoc working group, created by the African Union and composed of five Heads of State, been given the political space to engage in finding a way forward, perhaps an ill-fated intervention could have been avoided and the Sahel region would be more stable today.

In discussing the United Nations-AU partnership, one should not avoid the question of adequate means for the implementation of increasingly complex tasks. Peacekeeping mandates must be accompanied by the necessary resources. By the same token, regional actors should spare no effort to progressively bring their troops up to United Nations standards of performance. According to the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, chaired by former President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, it is estimated that Africa has lost $1 trillion over the past five decades owing to illicit financial flows — a concept that includes criminal activities, such as tax evasion, smuggling, bribery and corruption. That sum is equivalent to nearly all the official development assistance received by Africa during that time. According to the same report, illicit financial flows in Africa are increasing and now amount to $50 billion a year.

As one of its main recommendations, the Panel called for the African Union to elaborate a global governance framework to determine the conditions under which assets are frozen, managed and repatriated. That could present an opportunity to discuss the idea of using part of those resources to predictably fund peace and security efforts, including peacebuilding on the African continent. Let the Council bear in mind that the last approved annual budget of the United Nations for all peacekeeping operations was $8.27 billion dollars, which is only 16.5 per cent of what Africa loses annually through illicit financial outflows. We should also consider the challenges posed by the illegal exploitation of natural resources that not only fuels conflict, including by financing armed groups, but also has a devastating impact on sustainable development.

Again, from a perspective of enhancing prevention, a more active role should be given to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, on the one hand, and between the PBC and the Security Council, on the other. Today, all six countries on the agenda of the PBC are in Africa. The diversified membership of the Commission, currently chaired by Kenya, allows for discussions with a broad range of views.

Allow me finally to refer to a crisis that has remained without a satisfactory solution after two decades and would greatly benefit from a prevention-centred and holistic approach to conflict, as well as from enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. In 2007, a study by the International Rescue Committee concluded that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had directly or indirectly claimed the lives of 5.4 million people. Although the exact figure remains a matter of debate, that conflict must be placed among the great human cataclysms of our time. As one scholar on the Democratic Republic of the Congo has written, "The mortality figures are so immense that they become absurd, almost meaningless". Today, almost one decade after that study, the country continues to face enormous challenges. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are 7.5 million people in need of humanitarian help and protection. That is 9 per cent of the population.

Conflicts could have been avoided if we had focused more on prevention. Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the AU and taking full advantage of the African Peace and Security Architecture are indispensable steps. Developing a better understanding of how illicit financial flows impact areas subject to conflict is also essential. Africa is a continent of great human and natural wealth. Africans from all parts of the continent have demonstrated leadership and pragmatism, as well as the ability to inspire and innovate, from Nelson Mandela to Kofi Annan.

Brazil will continue to work closely with African countries within the multilateral and regional structures at our disposal in the promotion of peace and development, drawing upon our fraternal bonds.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wilson (Australia): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this important meeting today.

The scale, nature and compounding impact of today's global peace and security challenges are immense and seriously straining the resources and capacity of the United Nations to respond. Those issues have been felt most acutely by a number of African countries caught in cycles of violence, crisis and relapse. More than half of the world's armed conflicts are taking place in Africa, causing significant suffering and displacement. The majority of United Nations peacekeeping missions are deployed in Africa, and conflicts there dominate the Council's agenda. While the United Nations is rightly at the centre of global efforts to maintain international peace and security, it cannot and should not do it alone.

Strategic and operational partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, are essential to preventing crises, strengthening international responses, increasing coherence and complementarity of efforts, and achieving sustainable peace. Indeed, the need for closer strategic cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations was a consistent finding across the recent reviews on United Nations peace operations, peacebuilding architecture and resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, with the role of the African Union (AU) particularly emphasized. The outcome of the peacebuilding review built further on those findings, specifically encouraging regular exchanges, joint initiatives and information-sharing between the United Nations and the African Union. Australia strongly supports those efforts.

The United Nations has long understood that addressing the root causes of conflict is fundamental to finding durable solutions. Local and regional actors, including organizations like the African Union and its subregional economic communities, are often well placed to sound the early warning siren to the international community of emerging threats to peace. It is critical to make the most of the comparative advantages between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. Further strengthening the partnership between the AU and the United Nations is one of the most important opportunities to do that.

Great strides have been made over recent years to enhance United Nations-AU cooperation. Australia welcomes growing African leadership in maintaining peace and security in the region. But more can be done. Australia calls for all parties to continue to work together in those efforts, particularly to formalize early engagement to enhance communication and information-sharing; undertake joint analysis, coordinated threat assessments and joint early warning assessment missions to ensure common understanding; strengthen operational and policy coherence between the organizations; improve links between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council; and better facilitate transitions between regional and United Nations peace support operations, when required.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): I thank you, Mr President, and the Egyptian delegation for convening this timely open debate on United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the African Union (AU) and by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

International peace and security in an increasingly globalized world are contingent on ensuring the stability and prosperity of the broader international community. In that regard, we wish to reaffirm the primacy of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. In doing so, we should be cognizant of the fact that security matters on the African continent constitute the largest share of the work of the Security Council. Therefore, we should aim to deepen cooperation with regional organizations pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The relationship between the United Nations and the African Union is central to the implementation and the realization of a fuller understanding of the potential of Chapter VIII. We should recognize that the African Peace and Security Architecture has continued to play a vital role in the resolution of conflict on the continent since its inception, and is the central framework through which Chapter VIII engagement with the AU on peace and security matters should take place. To give effect to Chapter VIII of the Charter, there must be greater strategic political coherence between the two organizations in the resolution, prevention and management of conflicts in Africa. In that respect, the relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council is of particular significance.

Resolution 2033 (2012), adopted during South Africa's presidency of the Security Council in January 2012, recognizes that regional organizations are well placed to understand the nuances and complexities of conflicts. Furthermore, their proximity to the conflicts provides advantages in directly influencing the prevention and resolution of those conflicts. The complementary role of the United Nations and the AU in the resolution of conflicts and the maintenance of peace and security on the African continent has thus been affirmed by the Council.

In spite of the adoption of resolution 2033 (2012) and the practical manifestation of cooperation, we believe that much still needs to be done to further enhance that relationship as a matter of utmost necessity for the sustainable resolution of conflicts on the continent. We are disappointed that the array of strategies available for ensuring greater strategic coherence through regular, timely and effective consultations have not been exploited by the Council.

To that end, we must develop a more effective relationship between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council that extends beyond just their joint annual consultative meetings. That would also entail more regular consultation and coordination between the two Councils. In order to strengthen and sustain the vital relationship between the two organizations in addressing African conflicts, the interactions need to be consistent, and we should avoid a practice whereby the United Nations is selective in its approach and where the relationship is merely utilized in times of political convenience. We have seen situations where the significant role of the AU was ignored in the cases of African conflict situations, such as in Libya and Western Sahara, disregarding notions of comparative advantage and prolonging both those conflicts on the African continent and their negative impact on global security.

In Libya, for example, the failure of the Security Council to support the African Union in pursuing its political solution to the crisis has resulted in a power vacuum in that country. The military solution that was opted for has resulted in instability, the rise of terrorist groups and large numbers of migrants fleeing the conflict, resulting in a serious humanitarian challenge for the region and beyond. The lesson we should draw from the Libyan experience is that greater political coherence and a common vision between the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council are critical to the resolution of African conflicts.

The issue of capacity-building and sustainable resource allocation remains a fundamental challenge. In the past decade, the African continent has demonstrated sufficient political will and commitment to ridding the continent of all conflicts and wars. There have been gains in the full operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture, which are illustrated by the developments in bringing the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability to realization. However, we believe that it is the responsibility of the United Nations to provide predictable, sustainable and flexible financing to AU peace support operations, especially in those that are undertaken on behalf of the Security Council, and with a United Nations mandate.

We must acknowledge that, notwithstanding the Security Council's responsibility in that regard, AU member States are making greater efforts to assume greater responsibility on those matters. In that regard, we note that African troop- contributing countries have committed and sacrificed their troops in lethal first-response situations.

The mutually reinforcing relationship between the United Nations and the AU should extend beyond the period of conflict and to critical areas, such as peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and development. The nexus between peace, security and development underscores the imperative of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development in post-conflict settings.

In conclusion, the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the AU, have their respective comparative advantage. As the Secretary-General highlighted, our strategic partnerships need to be enhanced through closer collaboration and cooperation resulting in joint actions to address global peace and security.

The President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mr. Jinga (Romania) *(spoke in French)*: I thank the Egyptian presidency for organizing this open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. I also welcome the adoption this morning of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8.

Romania fully aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by the observer of the European Union. I shall deliver a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere condolences to the families of the five Blue Helmets from Chad who lost their lives in a terrorist attack on the same day that we were paying tribute at United Nations Headquarters to the 129 peacekeeping troops who were killed in 2015. That impressive number reminds us once again of our shared responsibility to act in favour of peace and security throughout the world so that their ultimate sacrifice will not have been in vain .

A few months ago, we marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1631 (2005), the first on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. As a sponsor of that document, Romania is pleased to note that the initiative proved to be far-sighted, because partnerships with regional organizations have been found to be very useful in promoting peace and security by all the evaluation processes carried out by the United Nations.

No other region of the world takes up so much of the Security Council's work as Africa. More than 60 per cent of the Council's activities are related to African issues. Africa also hosts more peacekeeping or peace support operations than any other continent. It is therefore rightly important to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and to develop partnerships between the two organizations in many areas. Indeed, the African Union (AU) has become a major player and has assumed its leadership role in peacekeeping and security on the continent, requiring ongoing efforts to institutionalize the cooperation mechanisms between the United Nations and the AU in all areas related to peace and security in Africa. In that regard, deeper political, operational and financial cooperation is necessary, including through ongoing exchange of information and experience.

Romania is actively engaged in efforts to stabilize countries in Africa affected by conflict. Over the course of 25 years of continuous participation in peacekeeping operations, Romania has deployed more than 10,000 troops under the United Nations flag. At present, Romania is participating in 10 peacekeeping operations and more than 90 per cent of its forces are deployed in African countries. Furthermore, Romania is the first country among European troop- and police-contributing countries in United Nations missions. Our contribution will increase in 2016 in terms of the capacity of our military and police personnel.

Following the request of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Romania has affirmed its willingness to increase the number of military observers and officers it provides and has increased the military capacity it provides to the United Nations Missions in Mali and the Central African Republic, which was announced at the Summit on peacekeeping operations, which took place last September.

I am pleased to inform the Council that the Romanian authorities are ready to deploy an additional 17 officers to three peacekeeping missions in Africa: the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and a formed police unit of 140 gendarmes has been made operational and added to the United Nations forces. In addition, Romania has invested in predeployment training in United Nations missions. In terms of the training school for Romanian gendarmes, we have developed for more than 10 years international advanced courses to train police and gendarmerie in French. The course also provides training for French speakers from the African continent.

In recognizing the paramount importance that the humanitarian dimension occupies in the United Nations efforts, Romania aligns itself with the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians in peacekeeping operations. In this joint effort, conflict prevention must play a key role in our response to crises. The concept of sustaining peace, as defined in resolution 2286 (2016), which was adopted last month by the General Assembly (see resolution 70/262) and the Security Council, puts prevention at the heart of our work. We are therefore pleased that the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016-2020 identifies the prevention of conflicts as a central priority.

In conclusion, Romania believes that African solutions must be found to African crises. In this perspective, we encourage closer cooperation to ensure the harmonious implementation of the agenda 2063 adopted by the African Union's Assembly and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Bonser (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Egyptian presidency for the opportunity to speak on the important issues of peace and security cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU).

(*spoke in English*)

In the decade since the signing of the 2006 Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation, both organizations have made important strides on a variety of peace and security issues. From close cooperation on peace operations, to the establishment of the United Nations liaison office to the African Union, to annual consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the United Nations and the AU have increasingly taken steps to work more closely to promote peace and security in Africa. Canada is encouraged by this progress.

(*spoke in French*)

But there is still much work to be done. Terrorism, organized crime and armed conflict pose threats to global, regional and national peace and security. As a result of the evolving threats to international peace and security, the responsibilities shouldered by the African Union and the regional economic communities have increased tremendously. As partners, we must ensure that our support for these African-led efforts evolve and rise to meet this challenge.

(*spoke in English*)

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that the United Nations and the AU continue to foster a stronger and deeper partnership, as recommended in the 2015 United Nations high-level reviews on peace operations, peacebuilding, and women and peace and security. Canada commends the United Nations liaison office at the African Union and the AU Peace and Security Department for developing a Joint United Nations-AU framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security. We strongly support the objective to deepen United Nations and AU collaboration across the conflict cycle, from conflict prevention, to conflict management and resolution, and ultimately to post-conflict reconstruction.

In this regard, Canada welcomes the development of the new African Peace and Security Architecture road map and encourages continued cooperation between the United Nations and the AU in implementing this vision. We recognize the inextricable links between peace and security and good governance, we also encourage the AU and the United Nations to further enhance their cooperation in operationalizing the African Governance Architecture, complementing the efforts of the Architecture's road map to move towards a more holistic approach to conflict.

Canada remains committed to working closely with African member States at the United Nations and to strengthening the relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. This is an important step to realizing our collective vision for sustainable peace in Africa.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Ms. Hailu (Ethiopia): Let me join others in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation. I also wish to express appreciation to all the briefers for their presentations this morning.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) has certainly evolved and expanded over the years to become one of the most important and strategic partnerships in the area of peace and security. I believe there are two reasons that shaped this important development.

First, the United Nations has come to recognize that it needs the effective partnership with others in addressing the enormous and complex peace and security challenges that the world is facing in the twenty-first century. Secondly, this need by the United Nations for partnership has been complemented by Africa's determination to take charge of matters related to peace and security on the continent, which culminated with the establishment of the African Union and its Peace and Security Architecture. These developments were indeed born out of the bitter experiences of the 1990s and the utter failure of the international community to come to Africa's rescue, especially during the horrendous genocide in Rwanda.

Over the past decade and more, the African Union and its various regional mechanisms have been much more proactive in responding to crisis situations in the continent. This ranges from the conduct of good offices' functions through the appointment of special envoys to prevent the escalation of conflicts, to the fielding of mediation teams to achieve a political solution and the deployment of peace support operations to stabilize conflict situations. On the other hand, the United Nations has been providing political backstopping, financial and logistical support, and capacity-building assistance to the African Union for the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

Accordingly, a division of labour has emerged between the two organizations based on their respective comparative advantages where the African Union and its regional mechanisms act as first responders to crisis situations in Africa, whereas the United Nations provides multidimensional support and later takes over in the peace consolidation phase. This dynamic partnership has indeed been proven to be very effective. As we have seen on a number of occasions, where there is synergy and coherence between the United Nations and the AU across the spectrum of peace operations, there will be tangible impact on the ground.

Nevertheless, this partnership is not without its challenges and there are indeed a number of strategic and operational issues that need to be seriously addressed. This can only be done if the partnership is institutionalized taking into account the principle of shared responsibility to ensure the necessary predictability and flexibility in effectively responding to crisis situations in Africa. It is indeed appropriate and logical that this is done so since the African Union and its regional mechanisms are operating on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

This is also what the peace operations review has rightly recommended and the United Nations should seize this opportunity to take important measures along this direction. Of course, we are aware of the process currently under way to develop a joint framework for enhanced cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in Africa and we look forward to the timely conclusion of these important discussions.

The relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council is indeed central to the strategic partnership between the two organizations. The three African members of the Security Council are the linchpin in this regard. Time and again, we have seen that the coordination of the three African members is critical not only in terms of advancing the African perspective, which demands that a clear message is conveyed, but also in promoting better coordination in and enhancement of relations between the two Councils.

It is indeed encouraging to be able to take note of the regular interaction between the two Councils. But, undoubtedly, there is room for improvement in the way these interactions take place so that they become more effective in delivering the desired results. What the challenges we are facing today require from the two Councils is that they transcend forms and maintain a frank and more substantive dialogue in order to ensure convergence at the strategic level in dealing with matters of peace and security in Africa.

In this context, consideration of the views and concerns of the African Union will greatly enhance the effectiveness of cooperation and ensure African ownership and priority-setting on the issues of peace and security affecting the continent. We therefore very much hope that the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union will evolve accordingly and that the Security Council will play a meaningful role in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Mitra (Bangladesh): We thank the Egyptian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's open debate. We also thank the distinguished briefers for sharing their insights and recommendations.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations envisioned strategic partnerships with regional arrangements as a critical element in the maintenance of international peace and security at a time when such arrangements were largely non-existent or at a nascent stage. Due to a number of factors, the dynamics of regional cooperation have evolved in the last 70 years, but they have done so in a more mature and pragmatic manner in some contexts than in others. It is to the credit of the States members of the African Union (AU) that they have been able to forge a robust regional cooperation mechanism with the aim of managing the challenges they face and embracing the abundant opportunities that have presented themselves. The African Peace and Security Architecture is a sure signpost in that direction.

The United Nations and the African Union have already built a sound platform for engagement and cooperation in the peace and security sphere. The experience garnered in the last 10 years has resulted in the formation of a number of arrangements that have been instrumental in enhancing synergy in the two organizations' peace and security efforts. The recent reviews of United Nations peace operations, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) have further affirmed this strategic direction, based on evidence and analysis.

There are indeed certain challenges inherent in the existing cooperation arrangements between the United Nations and the African Union. One of the fundamental concerns over burden-sharing in financing remains open for further dialogue. As we see it, in this regard, a flexible yet predictable approach will be crucial in response to specific situations, without our necessarily opting for a straitjacket arrangement that could prove to be self-defeating in certain cases.

Bangladesh has always been a strong proponent of regional cooperation and integration, within our own region and beyond. Within our means, we stand ready to further contribute to United Nations-African Union cooperation in peace and security and development. In this respect, I wish now to draw the Security Council's attention to five possible areas in which we can enhance our contribution.

First, as a committed troop- and police-contributing country, we shall continue to maintain our forces and stand-by capabilities so that we can rapidly respond to United Nations peacekeeping deployments in Africa and elsewhere. We are willing to provide any possible technical assistance to African stand-by forces and transition peacekeeping missions, as appropriate. We shall continue to offer training to African peacekeepers, building on the encouraging response we have received over the years.

Secondly, we have readily responded to opportunities for our troops and police to serve as early peacebuilders in places where they have left their footprints. In order to draw on and share the lessons and experience we have acquired in socioeconomic development, crisis management and institution-building, our Government has decided to establish a peacebuilding centre for conducting specialized training and research on sustaining peace. In this process, we look forward to building an effective interface with relevant AU initiatives, such as the AU centre for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Thirdly, as the traditional spokesperson for the least developed countries, Bangladesh has remained at the forefront of the promotion of the interests of most African countries, including those in or emerging from conflicts. We wish to further deepen our trade, investment and development cooperation with African nations, on the basis of our complementarities and comparative advantages.

Fourthly, we see merit in further engagement with Africa to learn from on another's experience in promoting the role of women in peace, security and development. As we see a paradigm shift in our society's attitudes towards the role of women in the public sphere, including in conflict prevention and resolution, we believe we have much to contribute to the evolving conversation on the contributions of women and girls as active change agents in their respective communities.

Fifthly and finally, we see criminal justice and accountability as a critical element in promoting national reconciliation in post-conflict societies. In Bangladesh, through much trial and tribulation, we have been working on developing a national criminal justice system. We would be welcome the opportunity to share our experience with interested countries in Africa and beyond with a view to helping them to strengthen their national judicial systems, in particular to account for mass atrocity crimes committed during wars and armed conflicts.

In conclusion, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Egyptian presidency of the Security Council for convening today's important meeting.

I also offer my thanks to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU) to the United Nations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, and the Permanent Representative of Kenya for their respective briefings.

Indonesia also associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Struggling against colonialism and other obstacles to development, African nations have had to navigate a difficult path. Overturning apartheid, the gradual building of institutions and the launch of policies for peace and progress were no small achievements. Not surprisingly, their enterprise as a whole has resulted in annual economic growth greater than 5 per cent for over 15 years. Nevertheless, like many other developing countries, including my own, Africa is still confronted with many challenges from poverty to natural disasters and from pandemics to terrorism, as well as issues related to refugees and transnational crimes. I would stress once more that these challenges do not belong solely and exclusively to Africa. Indeed, many other regions on other continents also face these challenges, requiring a similar serious, concerted undertaking by the United Nations and the international community.

Encouragingly, various debates at the United Nations, including the high-level thematic debate on peace and security that took place earlier this month, reflect widespread general agreement and enthusiasm for the key messages that came out of the recent three major reviews — of United Nations peace operations, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. In keeping with that spirit, Indonesia urges all concerned Member States and the United Nations system to intensify their focus on conflict prevention, integration and partnerships, with a view to resolving conflicts peacefully. In so doing, it is important to ensure that credible political solutions be the drivers in the design of peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives and that nationally owned comprehensive efforts in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights be adequately supported politically and sustained financially.

A robust regional partnership is what the African countries have envisioned for themselves. The African Union together with its mechanisms, in just 14 years, has shown an impressive depth and solidity. We applaud all of the members of the AU for enabling it to play an increasing role in social, political, economic and security issues.

The African leaders' declaration on achieving a conflict-free Africa is both commendable and a key pillar of the AU's visionary Agenda 2063. Many African mediators and peacekeepers have already performed admirably in challenging situations. We believe in the importance of the role of regional organizations in preserving peace and stability, as they are the ones that fully understand their respective regions and their cultures.

As a longstanding friend of Africa and an observer in the African Union, Indonesia supports the five thematic priorities of the AU's new road map for the period 2016-2020 in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Those efforts need the full support of the United Nations and the international community.

Similarly, in our region Vision 2020 of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations describes a group of nations that is outward looking and lives in peace, stability and prosperity in a partnership of dynamic development and in a community of caring societies. It has contributed greatly to peacefully managing disputes, thereby assuring our region's collective well-being.

Since the convening of the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung more than six decades ago, where the first generation of Asian and African leaders resolved to chart their nations' destinies based on new solidarity and vigour, Indonesia has attached high importance to its relations with Africa. The comprehensive way forward elaborated at last year's Asia-Africa Summit, in a declaration on reinvigorating the new Asia-Africa strategic partnership, outlines important steps aimed at bolstering the AU in achieving its aims. Among other things, the 2015 Bandung message calls for strengthening the roles and capacities of regional and subregional organizations in the two continents in areas of peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, through enhanced regional, South-South and triangular cooperation and in accordance with the principles of impartiality, the consent of the parties and national ownership and leadership.

Indonesia will continue its unwavering support to African countries. Our bilateral cooperation and training programmes in civilian capacity-building and other fields will expand further. Currently, 1,537 Indonesian troops and police are participating in eight United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. The Indonesian National Defense Forces Peacekeeping Centre, which has already imparted training in multidimensional peacekeeping and peacebuilding to personnel from a number of African countries, will continue to do so.

In conclusion, Africa is facing interconnected challenges in fully realizing its potential, thereby requiring an interconnected undertaking among Africa, the United Nations and the international community. As a longstanding friend of Africa that has supported the freedom of its nations since the Asia-Africa Conference of 1955, Indonesia remains committed to supporting Africa in achieving its vision of enduring peace and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Sana (Rwanda): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for convening this important meeting.

A discussion of this nature provides an opportunity to reflect on ways of reinforcing cooperation and partnership in areas of common interests. In the context of the African Union (AU) and the continent's regional economic communities, such partnership has been leading to positive outcomes, owing mostly to the advantages of local knowledge, proximity and the ability to mobilize and respond quickly. African issues constitute more than two thirds of the Security

Council's agenda, and that has been the case for many years. That percentage clearly shows that the African Union needs a stronger United Nations and that the United Nations needs a stronger African Union. We commend the many instances where both organizations have cooperated on initiatives to bring peace to conflict areas, such as in the Sudan and Darfur, Somalia and Mali.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Nations and AU envoys, together with those of the European Union and the United States, worked very closely to bring together regional countries in implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region. In the Central African Republic, the cooperation demonstrated in searching for a solution to the sectarian conflict showed the importance of planning together and sharing situational analyses. We believe that continued productive burden-sharing between the two bodies could be the key in addressing many of the problems facing our continent.

Frank and open communication is the foundation for any successful, productive partnership, especially in cases of complex joint endeavours, such as United Nations-authorized military interventions, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities. We believe that efforts to improve strategic cooperation should emphasize ways by which both bodies could have more regular and substantive interactions with executive representatives of their respective organizations on matters directly linked to peace and security in Africa. One joint annual consultative meeting is simply not enough. More to the point, are the format and decisions of such consultations sufficient? How substantive are they? What kind of follow-up mechanism exists to ensure their implementation? Such a practice would be an important step forward and might produce other innovative styles of interventions, including in dealing with complex cases while taking into account the genesis of the issue within a regional perspective.

Joint communiqués have been issued, and the Security Council has adopted relevant resolutions and presidential statements that underscore the importance of developing effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. I would like to recall that, during Rwanda's presidency in July 2014, the Council adopted resolution 2167 (2014), which calls for the strengthening of regional partnerships in peacekeeping. At the same time, at the initiative of Chad, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement in December 2014 (S/PRST/2014/27) that expresses its resolve to strengthen coordination and capitalize on the comparative advantages of two organizations.

The challenge we have today is to instil positive evolution towards that kind of partnership — to move from an ad hoc partnership to a more structured and strategic framework of partnership. As partners, the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council must work towards the same purpose in complementarity, based on their comparative advantages, including knowing when it is critical to prevent a conflict, or to rapidly deploy troops to avert the igniting of a large-scale conflict and save lives. There is a need to enhance our coordination, develop more efficient communications in matters of peace and security in Africa and hold timely consultations on matters. Where appropriate, the two Councils should undertake joint field missions.

In addition, we need to further address the challenges related to financial resources and technical capacity, which often compromise the goals and ambitions of many regional and subregional organizations, particularly the African Union. My delegation reiterates its call for enhancing the predictability, sustainability and flexibility in the financing of regional organizations in peace and security related efforts. In that regard, we call for sustained support to the newly established African Union Peace Fund, led by Mr. Kaberuka, which was put in place to provide the necessary resources for peace support missions and other operational activities related to peace and security. It is also our view that regional organizations should be encouraged to assume ownership of their initiatives as much as possible and strive towards self-reliance. As a partner, the United Nations should seek to actively assist the capacity-building of such organizations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti would like to express its gratitude to the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt for its leadership in organizing this important debate of the Security Council on the theme "United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture".

We would also like to thank the presidency for the concept note (S/2016/428, annex) drafted in preparation for this meeting, which helps frame the issues and sharpen our focus on key achievements as well as on the serious deficiencies that need to be remedied. We would also like to express our appreciation for this morning's very useful briefings.

Djibouti aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations sets out the international consensus on global-regional relationships. United Nations support in managing conflicts in Africa has become increasingly robust over the past 25 years, rising from two United Nations-led peacekeeping operations in 1990 to 15 in 2015. The missions in Africa constitute the majority of United Nations peacekeeping missions worldwide and have served as an important proving ground for United Nations engagement in managing conflict. What started largely as improvisation, to quote a former United Nations official, has evolved tremendously, and the African Union Peace and Security Council has proved a reliable partner on that journey.

As the concept note (S/2016/428, annex) rightly points out, and as echoed by many speakers today, the changing nature of conflict on the continent and the operational questions it raises add another layer of complexity to the cohesiveness of our global links, which have often been seriously tested in the past. How do we engage with non-State actors that do not respect humanitarian law? How do we deal with the increase in illegal activities and violent insurgencies? How do we ensure that the peacekeeping institutions, the regional economic communities, the African Union and the United Nations do indeed see their relationships as partnerships rather than a competition for which goes first and which leads in which process? Drawing on lessons learned and building on the pertinent views of many stakeholders and on the outcome of today's open debate, we should identify concrete ways for further strengthening an integrated worldwide system for cooperative action, as envisioned in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

(*spoke in French*)

In 2015, the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) considered it essential to improve cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, including through recommendations on strengthening conflict prevention capabilities and mediation. It also recommended emphasizing the importance of political solutions and joint cooperation on such solutions in order to ensure that the resulting broad range of partners would enable potential crises to be detected well in advance.

The forthcoming signing of the framework document for the 10-year strategic partnership document on peace and security between the United Nations and the African Union; Agenda 2063; and the campaign for "Silencing the guns in Africa by 2020", combined with the annual joint consultations since 2007 between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council constitute a major institutional framework for cooperation between the two entities. We have noted with satisfaction the implementation of this framework for cooperation with the United Nations through the creation of several regional and subregional organization liaison offices and the recent signing, in Djibouti in November 2015, of a partnership framework between the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations. Thanks to such mechanisms, cooperation at the inter-organizational level should be another resource to take advantage of. Such tools should inevitably result in developing shared strategies founded on joint assessments, solid decision-making mechanisms based on consultation and information-sharing, and follow-up arrangements that enable cooperation on planning and operations throughout the conflict cycle. Only with productive partnerships can we improve collective security.

The deployment of Blue Helmets, 50 per cent of them Africans, in a number of peacekeeping operations in various parts of the continent clearly demonstrates the commitment of African Member States and of the African Union and its regional components and member States to contribute, in complementarity with the United Nations, to collective security as it was envisaged by the Charter. The examples of cooperation with the African Union are many and varied — the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the joint missions in the Central African Republic and Mali, as well as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), are illustrations of that partnership.

Since its deployment in 2007, AMISOM, with its 22,000 soldiers and police, has contributed to a significant improvement in the security situation in Somalia. While Somalia remains fragile owing to the continued existence of areas of insecurity, a great deal of progress still remains to be made on the humanitarian front. In order to provide AMISOM with logistical support, and in keeping with carrying out its mandate effectively, the United Nations established the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia, aimed at strengthening AMISOM's limited operational and financial capacity. However, despite that support, the lack of force multipliers, such as helicopters, has been no help at all to the African force's task on the ground. To that we have to add the upcoming 20 per cent cut in funding from the European Union, which will have a severe effect on the Mission and risks becoming a serious setback to everything that has been and still remains to be achieved.

It is urgent that we find fertile ground for increased synergies, a harmonious African Union-United Nations partnership for preventing, mediating and managing violent conflicts and providing opportunities for more joint efforts to increase resource mobilization. In that regard, greater flexibility in interpreting Chapter VIII of the Charter would significantly reduce such problems in matters related to international peace and security.

Seventy per cent of the world's crises are concentrated in Africa, and the Security Council devotes two thirds of its deliberations to them. It is therefore vital to the continent's security, and to international peace and security generally, that we identify long-term solutions. To achieve that, we cannot economize on the importance of regular, collective reflection, particularly through holding regular meetings of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): Portugal welcomes your initiative in organizing today's open debate, Mr. President, and giving Member States an opportunity to express their views on such an important topic.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add a few words in my national capacity.

The declaration adopted by the African Union (AU) at its 2013 Summit set the ambitious goal of a conflict-free continent by the end of 2020. That is now a key pillar of the AU's Agenda 2063 and the road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture. We all agree that it is not an easy task, but it should not be impossible to achieve. The strengthening of the United Nations-AU strategic partnership, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly through strengthened dialogue and well-designed cooperation between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the AU, is crucial to helping to achieve that ambitious goal. We believe that closer and more fruitful cooperation between those two bodies will make a difference in bringing about a more sensible approach to peace and security in Africa and a more efficient response to major security threats, such as transnational organized crime and terrorism, which will be key to preventing conflicts in the future.

The recently concluded reviews of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and peacekeeping operations, and of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, clearly emphasize that. They also explain why the role of partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and conflict situations, and in post-conflict-affected countries, is so fundamental. Regional and subregional organizations enjoy additional legitimacy that channels regional and national ownership. They can also keep a closer eye on and have a better understanding of situations of common concern and in need of attention on the ground. They are, and must be, on the front line of action and responsibility, and the United Nations must partner with them closely.

With regard to conflict prevention, mediation activities and peacekeeping operations in Africa, cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the AU, and between both those organizations and other international actors, must be shaped in a way that is conducive to early assessments of challenges and to better-tailored responses. As we know, those are more likely to succeed by ensuring sustainable solutions to conflicts and properly addressing their root causes. At this point, I would once again like to stress that establishing mechanisms aimed at ensuring the involvement and active participation of women in preventing conflicts and supporting peace and in post-conflict processes in Africa is very critical. In our view, the women and peace and security agenda should always be at the centre of United Nations-African Union cooperation in the maintenance of peace and security.

We believe that the promotion of regional integration in Africa can also greatly contribute to sustaining peace. Further advances in that regard, with good coordination between regional economic communities and the AU Peace and Security Council, are welcome and should be encouraged. One area of particular importance when it comes to African conflict-afflicted countries is security sector reform. It deserves our consistent attention and requires joint efforts to consolidate and disseminate the lessons learned and the best practices for promoting and sustaining the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as development, which must play a central role. We recognize that the African Peace and Security Architecture provides the African continent with a valid structure and suitable mechanisms to support peace. However, we are aware of the persistent challenges, notably in ensuring true national ownership of the peacebuilding framework and strengthening the capabilities of African countries.

We are all aware that these processes require strong political will and leadership, alongside the consistent support of the international community. When it comes to international support to sustain peace, there is clearly room for improvement, including by stepping up efforts and providing training and adequate equipment. If we want peace to be sustainable, we must be ready to grant consistent attention and the required means as long as necessary. The sustainability and predictability of resources are deeply interlinked as preconditions for effectiveness. In that regard, deepening the partnerships between the United Nations, the AU, regional economic communities, international financial institutions and regional development banks to ensure the diversification of funding sources for peacebuilding activities is, in our opinion, the way to go.

We also welcome and encourage the further development of the synergies of the African Peace and Security Architecture, closely linking action on peace and security initiatives with democracy, good governance and human rights, in line with the principles expressed in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The United Nations and the AU should therefore combine their respective efforts and further optimize the use of the instruments at their disposal.

I would simply recall the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy, launched in 2007 in Lisbon, based on comprehensive joint interests and values, including respect for human rights, freedoms, equality, solidarity, justice and democracy, which remains a very unique kind of partnership. The dialogue and institutional cooperation in the context of the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy have so far led to concrete, positive results not only in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, but also in sustaining peace and in post-conflict reconstruction. They have also proven to be relevant in the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The trilateral cooperation, based on the broad common ground shared by the United Nations, the AU and the European Union has also proven to be quite valuable and should continue to be promoted and further strengthened.

In conclusion, Portugal, bilaterally and as a member of the European Union and of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, has been a consistent supporter of those efforts and will definitely continue to be.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. I will speak in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this useful meeting. Today, the international community is facing increasingly complex challenges to peace and security that are outpacing the current capacity of the United Nations. The United Nations has administrative and budgetary constraints, in addition to structural problems in addressing those global challenges.

The recent peace and security reviews have confirmed that partnerships and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations are key factors for the success of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation with regional and subregional organizations on mediation (A/70/328) also underlines the need for enhanced partnerships. It also calls for strengthening the existing strategic mechanisms between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), especially in the field of peace operations and in finding lasting political solutions to the continent's problems.

While discussing the ways to achieve peace and stability in Africa, we must emphasize the role of the continent's own peace and security arrangements. In that context, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) embraces a comprehensive agenda for peace and security in the continent. We believe that the APSA road map for 2016-2020 will contribute to achieving the goals of the African Union initiative Silencing the Guns. We also believe that APSA will contribute to the realization of the goals within the African Union Agenda 2063 in the long run as well. Furthermore, covering cross-cutting issues — such as gender and youth mainstreaming in peace and security, the possible consequences of climate change and natural resource management on conflict, and migration flows — highlight the significance of the road map.

Efficient early warning systems are fundamental for Africa. To that end, We are pleased to see that APSA and its two key components, the African Standby Force and the Continental Early Warning System, have been put into operation. We likewise welcome the appointment of the new High Representative for the African Peace Fund, Mr. Donald Kaberuka. As part of APSA, it is important to maintain coordination among the partners, regional mechanisms and the African Union so that, in particular, the partners can receive updated information regarding the process of the implementation of the road map.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides the legal framework for the United Nations to enter into regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security. We are glad to observe the positive trend in the past decade on the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union to find solutions to ongoing conflicts in Africa on the basis of such a legal framework.

In 2011 and 2012, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission released their respective reports on how to enhance relations between the two organizations. In that regard, progress in implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the future of peace operations (S/2015/682), which includes work on developing a joint United Nations-African Union framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security, is crucial. The establishment of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security in September 2010 was perhaps the most practical step at improving bilateral cooperation.

Turkey encourages the expansion of the United Nations-African Union partnership so as to include areas such as institutional capacity-building, security sector reform, the protection of civilians, human rights, gender mainstreaming and combating organized crime. Turkey also contributes bilaterally to peace and security in Africa. In the second Africa-Turkey Summit, held in Malabo in November 2014, we reiterated our desire to continue cooperation in all fields of peace and security through the exchange of expertise, information and training programmes. The Joint Implementation Plan of Africa-Turkey Partnership, adopted at the Summit, outlines the way ahead to further strengthen our comprehensive collaboration.

Peace and security are an important pillar of that cooperation. Since 2008, when Turkey became one of the strategic partners of the continent, we have been providing financial assistance to the African Union. Turkey also allocated resources to the East African Standby Force activities from its annual contributions for the years 2015-2016. We are also working on providing further support to the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis .

Turkey takes part in the United Nations missions deployed in the continent. We are currently providing personnel and contributing financially to seven of the nine existing peacekeeping missions in Africa. Moreover, Turkey also takes part in five out of six country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission. Turkey has been chairing the Horn of Africa Working Group within the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, with the EU. Within the framework of the peacebuilding and State-building efforts in Somalia, Turkey is co-chairing the Security Sector Working Group with the United States. Moreover, Turkey contributed $2 million in total to the African Union Mission in Somalia in 2009 and 2012 to ensure the improvement of the security environment in Somalia and an effective fight against Al-Shabaab.

Turkey will continue to do its utmost to contribute to peace and security in Africa. We will also constructively participate in international and regional initiatives to that end.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Bosah (Nigeria): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the delegation of Egypt for having organized this open debate. We also wish to thank the briefers for their perspectives on the subject under discussion.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security is a growing trend. It has been demonstrated time and again that regional and subregional organizations can contribute their usually proximate understanding of local and regional conflicts and their root causes to a mutually beneficial partnership with the United Nations. Over the years, many regional and subregional organizations have taken advantage of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides the platform through which the United Nations and regional organizations could work together to prevent, manage and resolve crises and develop strategies to effectively engage in peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

While the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security resides with the Security Council, regional actions lighten the burden of the Council and provide an added layer of legitimacy to multilateralism. Indeed, regional efforts enhance the prospects for inclusivity and consensus in addressing the increasing challenges to global peace and security. Threats, such as extremist ideologies, terrorism, the illicit transfer and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, humanitarian disasters, human trafficking, environmental hazards, drug trafficking, the criminal use of cybertechnology and global pandemics, among others, are critical factors that have profoundly shaped international security in modern times. Those security challenges tend to be transnational in character and are often beyond the capacity of any one country to resolve. That makes the collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations all the more pertinent.

It is significant to underline the importance of the cooperation that exists between the United Nations and the African Union (AU). In 2006, both organizations reached an agreement on the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU that provides the main framework for United Nations assistance to the AU. Under the Programme, the United Nations has supported the African Union in areas such as capacity-building for mediation, electoral assistance and technical assistance to the African Union Peace and Security Council. The United Nations and the African Union have also worked for the maintenance of peace and security through collaboration in peacekeeping operations on the African continent. The Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council have, through their annual consultations, held discussions on issues of common interest, especially conflict situations in Africa. Those consultations are mutually beneficial because they allow for close coordination of the actions of the African Union and the United Nations in matters of peace and security. We believe that the process could benefit from a strengthening of the policy-level coordination between the two organizations.

While those developments are encouraging, the opportunities and challenges remain critical points for ensuring a more functional and effective cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional arrangements. Such cooperation and collaboration must be premised on a clear division of labour that recognizes the relative advantage of each organization. We believe that more work needs to be done on how the United Nations can better support arrangements for further cooperation and coordination with the African Union on Chapter VIII arrangements in addressing common security challenges. Such arrangements would also serve to deepen and broaden dialogue and cooperation between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

In concluding, I wish to call attention to the fact that in the face of the increasing gap between the demand for the involvement of the United Nations in conflict situations, on the one hand, and the United Nations ability to respond effectively, on the other, regional organizations become even more compelling as enablers of peace. That is why we believe that greater consideration should be accorded to expanding and enhancing regional approaches to the pursuit of international peace and security. Regional approaches, in essence, represent a critical bridge between the national and global dimensions of conflict. It is a bridge that we must continue to build, no matter how challenging that may appear to be.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida: I have the pleasure to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 28 member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which are all candidate countries to join the European Union; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Allow me to thank you, Sir, for having taken this initiative and the good concept note (S/2016/428, annex).

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations explicitly recognizes and encourages the role of regional arrangements in peace and security and strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations. We very much welcome and support the expansion and intensification of United Nations-African Union (AU) peace and security cooperation over the past 10 years since the launch of the Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU in 2006. For its part, the European Union has always been committed to effective multilateralism and to intensifying its cooperation with the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union.

We have also invested in strong triangular cooperation among the EU, the AU and the United Nations to face immediate challenges and build capacities in a comprehensive and long-term perspective. The added value of that cooperation is clearly illustrated by the results of our joint efforts in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic, as well as in other parts of Africa. We welcome the recommendations of the United Nations reviews on peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture and resolution 1325 (2000), and expect that follow-up work will include concrete steps to enhance the overall effectiveness of the global security architecture, in full recognition of the role of regional organizations and the AU-United Nations partnership. The EU also promotes the improvement of engagement of the United Nations and regional organizations with civil society in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and mediation.

Improved cooperation and coordination with and among regional organizations is indeed a priority. We are pleased, in that regard, with the long-standing and fruitful partnership that we have developed with the African Union. We strongly support the African aspiration and commitment to ensuring peace, security and stability on the continent, in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, in order to improve the African capacity to prevent or respond to crises, we are committed to operationalize the multidimensional African Standby Force and recognize the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises as a transitional and complementary tool to the African Standby Force for further enhancing the AU capacity to respond rapidly to crises and reinforce the support to the Continental Early Warning System.

Consultations were held last year to identify common priorities for capacity-building support for 2016 to 2018. The EU also funded a command and control coordination information system designed to manage AU-led peace support operations, which will be fully operational in 2017.

We also welcome the progress that has been made to date in enhancing the capacity of the African Union to manage crises on the continent. We value the positive role that the African Union has played in the context of several electoral crises on the continent and in recalling very clearly the principles of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance. In that context, we especially welcome and appreciate the intense participation of African countries in peace support operations on the continent — be it in United Nations missions or hybrid or African Union-led missions. Every day, like many others from around the world, those peacekeepers are putting their lives at risk to fight insurgents, protect civilians and try to prepare the ground for peace. They deserve our support, and the EU has been providing just that.

Within the framework of the EU's comprehensive approach to tackling conflicts and its causes, and building on the experiences of our Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations, such as those in Mali, the Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Central African Republic, the EU is committed to working in close collaboration with Africa in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, in support of African-led peace operations and, more generally, with African efforts in such areas as security sector reform, border management, peacebuilding or post-conflict reconstruction or reconciliation, through the provision of advice, mentoring and training.

The EU and its African partners have laid the foundation for cooperation on a number of security challenges with several regions in Africa — for instance, in the Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa. They all address security threats and forms of organized crime, including trafficking in arms, drugs and persons and the issue of piracy.

On an institutional level, the EU and AU Peace and Security Councils hold an annual joint meeting and retreat, where the two Councils have an opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue on issues of mutual interest. Regular contacts between the Chairs of the EU and Councils also contribute to deepening the political dialogue between the two bodies, which also undertook a joint field visit to Mali last year. In that regard, we welcome the regular meetings between the Council and the AU Peace and Security Council.

The EU has provided substantial financial support for African peace operations. In the 10 years since 2004, the EU has provided nearly €2 billion to AU-led peace operations through its African Peace Facility, by which, among others, we support the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia against Al-Shabaab, and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism in South Sudan led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as the multinational joint task force against Boko Haram and the Economic Community of West African States Security mission in Guinea-Bissau.

Other EU instruments and programmes are increasingly involved in that area, in particular the eleventh European Development Fund Regional Indicative Programme and the instrument contributing to stability and peace, which supports regional mediation efforts by IGAD in South Sudan and the East African Community in Burundi. The EU's emergency response mechanism is used to support early civilian and/or military interventions such as ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanisms. It recently helped fund the deployment of AU human rights and military observers in Burundi.

In July 2015, EU member States addressed the sustainability challenges of the African Peace Facility. They agreed on an increase to the African Peace Facility envelope from €750 million to €900 million. A further agreement was reached recently for €710 million to ensure funding for the African Peace Facility for the period 2016-2018. At the same time, the EU also realized that it was necessary to gradually reorient our support towards more practical, physical capacities such as logistics and deployment, and decided to reorient the African Peace Facility to that effect. That will not suffice, however. Some of the new threats, such as the fight against terrorist groups, will require significant resources and take time. The situation warrants urgent additional support from African and non-African partners and the United Nations to effectively support African-led peace support operations.

The African Peace and Security Architecture is an African-owned process. Long-term sustainability and African ownership are intrinsically linked. The heavy dependence by the AU and African regional organizations on international partners and on EU funds limits African ownership and the establishment of lasting African capacities to address Africa's peace and security issues. The recent appointment of the highly respected former President of the African Development Bank, Mr. Donald Kaberuka, as AU High Representative to the AU Peace Fund is an important sign of the AU's commitment to tackle financial challenges. Mr. Kaberuka visited Brussels last week, where he exchanged views about his plans for the implementation of financial commitments made by AU leaders at recent AU summits and about his deliberations on setting up the AU Peace Fund with sustainable and predictable financing. We look forward to further cooperation with Mr. Kaberuka in that regard.

In conclusion, we remain strongly committed to an ever-stronger partnership with the AU, as well as increased triangular cooperation among the EU, AU and the United Nations, in order to fully achieve the establishment of lasting African peace and security capacities in full respect of African ownership.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Buffin (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for taking the initiative to organize this debate, which allows us to address the important issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security. I would also like to express my gratitude for the briefings.

Belgium fully endorses the statement just made on behalf of the European Union. I wish to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Today's debate is important because it is on the African continent that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is the most developed. At the same time, it is there that such cooperation is the most necessary, in view of the numerous challenges to peace and security that arise there. This debate is also important because it makes it possible to recall the added value of regional organizations in resolving and preventing conflict thanks to their knowledge of the terrain, the protagonists and mindsets, not to mention their interest in promoting stability in their immediate environment. In short, there is a complementarity of action between the United Nations and regional organizations that should be strengthened, in particular in view of finding African solutions to African problems. I should like to make the following comments on the specific issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security.

First, in recent years we have noted the development of a growing and varied partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. That partnership has resulted in very concrete results, such as the takeover of an African Union mission by a United Nations mission, in Mali and in the Central African Republic, and the logistical support provided by the African Union Mission in Somalia, to name just a two. Those developments are encouraging insofar as they reflect an increasing interaction and a shared vision of peacekeeping.

Furthermore, I believe that there is another area of operation to explore with regard to peacekeeping technical capabilities. The Department of Field Support has developed unequalled know-how in that area, especially in organizational and logistical matters. In that regard, the African Union might benefit from a transfer of knowledge for the development of its security architecture.

As a State member of the European Union (EU), Belgium is, moreover, in favour of pursuing a relationship of tripartite cooperation among the European Union, the United Nations and the African Union. I recall that the European Union has played a pioneering role in the area of cooperation with the African Union. To this day, it remains the main financial contributor to the peacekeeping operations of the African Union. The tried-and-tested European Union African Peace Facility should be maintained. For all that, the search for a lasting solution to the issue of financing for African Union peacekeeping operations must continue. In that regard, we welcome the commitment undertaken by States members of the African Union at the January 2015 Summit to shoulder 25 per cent of the cost of those operations by the end of the decade.

In practical terms, deepening cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union that Belgium would wish to see could advance through the implementation of some simple and practical measures. In terms of information exchange, for example, we would suggest that United Nations representatives and special envoys be regularly invited to speak before the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Conversely, the various envoys and facilitators of the African Union should also appear regularly to express their views before the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission when crisis situations or matters of mutual interest so require. That would promote the direct exchange of information and good practices and more consistent analyses.

Another area in which the importance of close cooperation between the two organizations is crucial is support for electoral processes. Elections are an area of activity where the African Union and the United Nations must work together in a concerted effort of mediation and conflict prevention. The 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance could be a useful reference point in that regard.

In that regard, the Democratic Republic of the Congo provides us with a specific situation where the African Union is working to launch a dialogue between the opposition and the Government in order to shape the electoral process, and could benefit from significant support from the United Nations. In Burundi, too, the good understanding between the United Nations and the African Union, via coordinated action between their respective special envoys, is essential to support subregional mediation. A complementary approach could be adopted, as necessary, between the observers of African Union, who are already deployed in the country, and the future United Nations police mission. Furthermore, the United Nations has mediation expertise that can be very useful in such situations and should be shared with the African Union.

In conclusion, Belgium welcomes the initiatives of the African Union aimed at implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I am thinking specifically of the appointment in January 2014 of Ms. Bineta Diop as Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security by the President of the African Union Commission. I also note the launch in June 2014 of the five-year Gender, Peace and Security programme, which was designed to increase the participation of women in promoting peace and security, while enhancing their protection in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa.

There is a complementarity of action and clear common goals between the African Union and the United Nations in working for the maintenance of international peace and security. Political, operational and logistical cooperation is possible. It is therefore our wish that our debate today helps to lay a new milestone on the path of strengthening the partnership between those two organizations with a view to ending the too many conflicts that still plague Africa and its peoples.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate Egypt once again on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council, and thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate on the theme "United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture".

The founding fathers of the United Nations were eager to include in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provisions to support the efforts of regional and subregional organizations in the field of peace and security because they fully understood that world peace is indivisible. They also understood that the establishment of effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security is also indispensable.

To that end, the recommendations of the joint African Union-United Nations panel established under resolution 1809 (2008) adopted recommendations on modalities for support to African Union (AU) peacekeeping operations. The first part of the panel's report (see S/2008/813) stressed the importance of enhancing the strategic relations between the AU and the United Nations and operationalizing channels of joint action between the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council in genuine partnership and direct coordination, including in decision-making and shared responsibilities pursuant to the mandates of the two organizations. That is why the relationship between the AU and the United Nations has been strong and extensive. The two organizations have made progress in supporting their mutual relations, according to opinions expressed in the 2006 Declaration entitled "Enhancing United Nations-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union".

With respect to promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the AU in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa and the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes, that should top the list of our priorities, including mediation on border issues, early warning and logistical capacity-building. We look forward to further close coordination, particularly with regard to the support provided by the United Nations to the Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the Africa Union and the fields of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. The financing of regional peacekeeping operations continues to occupy a central role with regard to defining and organizing relations between the two organizations.

With regard to peacekeeping, the delegation of the Sudan would like to underscore the cooperation between the Secretariat and the AU Commission in the context of the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Such cooperation has proven useful since the previous African Union Mission in Sudan operation became a joint operation between the two organizations on 31 December 2007 under resolution 1769 (2007). The Mission has become an example of cooperation between the AU and the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, we recall the joint report submitted by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the hybrid operation in Darfur (see S/2007/307) in June 2007. The report stressed that UNAMID had an exclusively African nature and component, while the United Nations provided financial, technical and logistical support, including technical advice in various fields. The Mission thereby symbolizes cooperation between the two organizations.

The time has come to implement a road map for the drawdown of UNAMID, especially since we have already turned the page on the conflict and the situation in the five states has normalized. Internally displaced persons in different parts of Darfur have returned to their homes and started living their lives normally. In addition, more than 100,000 returnees returned to their homes after the roads between Jebel Marra and other major areas in Darfur and in the Sudan had been secured.

Moreover, we would like to point out that primary school students recently sat for exams under stable and secure conditions for the first time in 13 years. Council members probably followed the administrative referendum in Darfur on the implementation of the provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and how the referendum was carried out in a free and transparent manner. The results, which were declared on 23 April, all supported the maintenance of the status quo, that is, the choice of the states, by a majority of 97.72 per cent.

I would also like to cite yet another example that demonstrates the successful cooperation between the African Union and the Organization through regional mediation mechanism, such as the High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, headed by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, which plays an important role in the maintenance and promotion of peace in the Sudan and between the Sudan and South Sudan. Such constructive cooperation must be promoted, and the mechanisms must be given time to resolve the pending issues between the two countries.

I would like to stress that the Government of the Sudan endorsed and signed the road map prepared by the high-level mechanism to promote the comprehensive peace process in the Sudan, while the opposition continues to obdurately refuse to sign it. We therefore call on the Council to bring pressure to bear on those who have so far refused to sign the road map so that everybody can concentrate their efforts on building and reconstruction.

Lastly, my country would like to welcome presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8, which underscores the increased contribution of regional and subregional organizations in complementing the role of international organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and in enhancing the capacity of national legal systems to undertake their role in the area of accountability. I would like to reiterate the statements made by previous speakers that regional and subregional organizations have a comparative advantage in achieving peace and security because they are familiar with the local cultures of conflict areas. We also pay tribute to the Security Council and appeal to it to give such organizations time to find the necessary solutions.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Egypt on taking the initiative of organizing this meeting. I would also like to congratulate the various speakers who spoke before me for their very valuable briefings. I welcome this opportunity afforded to me and I welcome the willingness and determination of the Security Council to establish strong cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations in order to contribute to international peace and security. My country particularly welcomes this approach and the efforts made by the African Union, in particular because we know that the African continent has been for many years the most unstable continent and the most inclined to conflicts.

Allow me to refer to some of the statements made by some Member States of the Security Council in referring to the situation in my country and alleged that the Head of State intends to remain in office. First of all, in that regard, in numerous of our statements to the Security Council we have made it clear that the Head of State respects his country's Constitution and will not modify it as has been done elsewhere.

With regard to the organization of elections, my country has also insisted here in the Chamber on many occasions that the elections will be held but that they must take place under proper conditions in order to maintain peace and security, which the Congolese people, who have suffered so greatly from wars, greatly value. Those who love the Democratic Republic of the Congo must understand that and help us to that end.

Furthermore, my country is surprised by the double-standard positions that have been taken by some members of the Security Council. The world, which is listening to Council members and observing them as they conduct their deliberations in the Chamber, are surprised by the positions taken by some Council members with regard to some States while they indulge other States. That could jeopardize the credibility of the good decisions that the Council normally takes.

With regard to human rights violations, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country said to the Security Council, by making both the National Human Rights Commission and the human rights liaison entity operational, my country has resolutely indicated its firm and ongoing determination to protect the rights of all its citizens, even the foreigners living on its territory.

The political space in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the most open in the entire region, and will remain so. That can be seen in the existence of approximately than 400 political parties as well as in the hundreds of private radio and television stations, which are allowed to freely determine their editorial positions, many of which reflect those of well-known political players who are members of the opposition. The media is constitutionally controlled by the High Audiovisual and Communication Council, which supports democracy and which includes representatives from the media in all their diversity.

It has also been clearly shown that, unlike in other countries where if one opposes the Government one must leave the country, practically all political leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo live in the country and engage in political activity. They can come and go from the territory without any restrictions on their movements owing to their opinions.

That having been said, as in any State governed by the rule of law, where the primacy of law and the equality of all before the law are fundamental principles, public freedoms are to be exercised in conformity with the law and the need to maintain public order. As guarantor of the freedoms and rights of all, the State is obligated to uphold these principles, consistent with the adage that holds that the rights of one end where the rights of others begin. An individual's rights and freedoms do not permit the individual to flout with impunity the legal system designed to protect the rights and safety of all.

Accordingly, when necessary, as in any State governed by the rule of law, the courts intervene, acting with complete independence, to punish those who commit crimes. Membership in the political opposition, the political majority, civil society or the police or the military does not release a perpetrator from legal responsibility for committing a crime. For a country like ours, whose people have suffered greatly from the impunity of those who enjoy privileges derived from their social status or standing, softness in this area does not help to strengthen democracy, but rather serves to undermine it. The same applies when serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity are not prosecuted.

My country believed it was necessary to bring those points to the Council's attention.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.